Solons work out sharing scheme to end pork row

STORY BELOW, COLUMN 1.

HINDI NYO AKO PWEDENG HULIHIN, SUBUKAN N'YO!

Loi: Martyr for 43 years

By C. D. Balana and Michael Ubac

SEN. Luisa "Loi" Ejercito Estrada yesterday made light of the Sandiganbayan's subpoena order, by making a playful dig

LOI/A15

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER
BALANCED NEWS, FEARLESS VIEWS

Economists turn to sushi to predict the future

SHANGHAI—Golf courses in Shanghai, shoeshine offers in Buenos Aires, sushi bars in New York and singing gorillas in Dallas have something in common.

They may be able to predict the future.

They may be not the obvious places to take the pulse of the world economy. But in these uncertain times when government data from Beijing to Berlin are sending out

ECONOMISTS/A17

e-mail: feedback@inquirer.com.ph Tuesday, May 14, 2002 ★★ 42 pages / 4 sections / vol.17 / no. 155 P15 website: www.inq7.net

PCGG won't pay for info on Swiss loot

By Donna S. Cueto

WHY pay if the government already has the information?

The Presidential Commission on Good Government (PCGG) took this line yesterday after a new witness offered information on the transfer of as much as $400 million in Marcos money from Switzerland to Liechtenstein.

The US law firm Blank Rome Comisky & McCauley, which is representing the witness, a Canadian-Welsh lawyer, is demanding $225,000(about P12.15 million), among other conditions, before the Philippine government can interview its client in the United States.

The US law firm is also demanding a 2-percent share of any funds recovered from Liechtenstein, Switzerland or any other place where the funds were placed.

Madame Z, the new witness, said in an initial proffer of evidence that Credit Suisse transferred $400 million from Switzerland to Lipag AG, a subsidiary in Liechtenstein, just before a Swiss court freeze order on Marcos accounts took effect on March 24, 1986.

But PCGG Chair Haydee Yorac said the commission already had "general information" about the fund transfers.

Francisco Chavez, a former solicitor general, said the Philippine government need not pay the lawyers of the witness.

"All that the government has to do is to request for information from the French National Assembly," Chavez said. The action could be done on a "government-to- government level," he said.

Madame Z testified before the French National Assembly about the Marcos fund transfers on May 25, 2000.

"There is no question about the credibility of Madame Z. The question is the labyrinthine and almost impossible conditions being imposed by his lawyers before the Philippine government can see her," Chavez said.

PCGG/A18

Royalty helping Marcoses hide $400-M hoard

By Donna S. Cueto

(Third of a series)

JUST how powerful were the people involved in hiding as much as $400 million in Marcos money? Let's start with a member of the royal family in Liechtenstein, a principality situated between Switzerland and Austria.

It was first revealed in the French National Assembly that no less than the uncle of the current Prince of Liechtenstein was involved in protecting Marcos money in a Liechtenstein foundation.

Prince Constantin von und zu Liechtenstein, uncle of Liechtenstein's monarch, Prince Hans-Adam II, was appointed chair of the board of Limag AG, the Liechtenstein foundation where Marcos funds were transferred from Switzerland in March 1986 to evade a Swiss freeze order.

This information was part of the testimony of Madame Z, a Canadian barrister and solicitor who has emerged as a new Swiss arm of KPMG International, an auditing and consulting firm, from 1996 to 1997 during which she learned of the transfer of Marcos funds from Credit Suisse.

ROYALTY/A18

SAFETY RECORD HITS BOTTOM REUTERS

Add to the country's already appalling maritime safety record the drowning of 19 passengers with 70 injured from a ferry carrying three times its 30-passenger capacity last Saturday. The coffins of the dead are transported from Biliran. *(Story on Page A2).*

Before evidence is in, GMA clears Ramos in power mess

By Carlito Pablo and Michael Lim Ubac

IT WASN'T his fault.

A month before the inter-agency committee reviewing the government's power contracts submits its report, President Macapagal-Arroyo already cleared former President Fidel V. Ramos of any liability for the current Purchased Power Adjustment mess.

While assuring the public that contracts proven to be anomalous "will be repealed and those responsible for them will be charged," Ms Macapagal suggested that Ramos was actually the victim of circumstance.

The Ramos administration had allowed the contracts—signed at the height of the power crisis in the early 1990s and responsible for solving it—on the basis of positive economic projections.

"But according to him (Ramos), the 1997 Asian crisis broke out," the President said. "The projected growth in the

BEFORE/A17

GETTY IMAGES

'DARK NIGHT WAKES, GLORY BREAKS . . .'

The Church of the Nativity in the West Bank town of Bethlehem resumes its activities as Christianity's holiest site on Sunday where a priest says Mass for the first time after a 37-day standoff between Palestinian militants and Israeli forces.

'I've told my son his dad is a priest'

By Armand N. Nocum

A 33-YEAR-OLD woman is seeking child support from a 49-year-old priest who once served as the principal of the Don Bosco High School in Makati City.

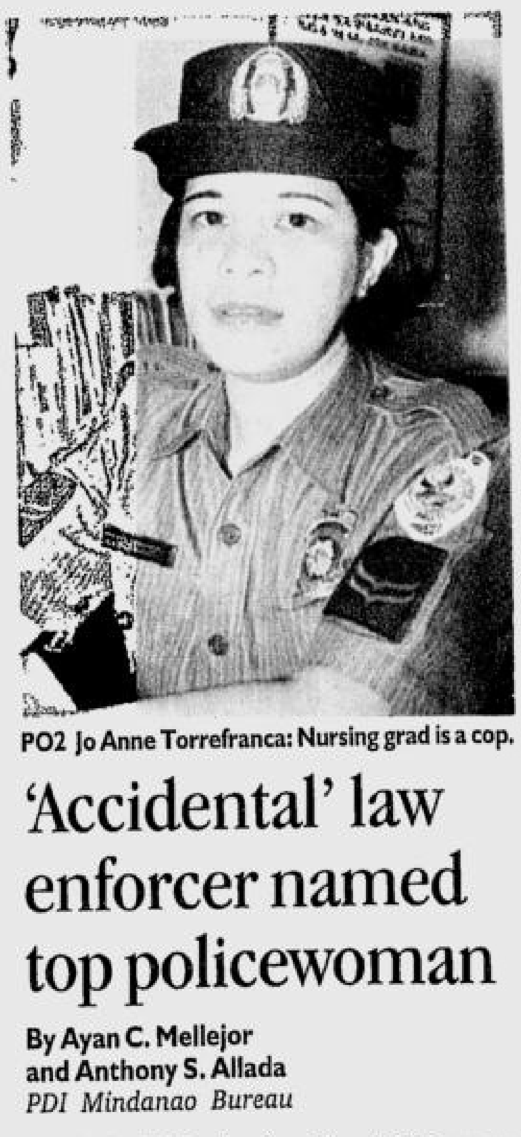
The woman said she had a relationship lasting close to five years with Fr. Nicanor Sta. Maria of the Salesians of Don Bosco (SDB) while she was working as his secretary. She said the fruit of the relationship was a son, now nine years old.

She also said that after the scandal regarding her pregnancy broke out, the SDB transferred Sta. Maria to Puerto Rico and then to Florida in the United States.

In an interview with the INQUIRER, the woman said both Sta. Maria and his religious order had been ignoring her pleas for child support except for paying half of her son's tuition when he was in the first grade.

She stressed that it was not only financial

I'VE/A15



PO2 Jo Anne Torrefranca: Nursing grad is a cop.

'Accidental' law enforcer named top policewoman

By Ayan C. Mellejor and Anthony S. Allada
PDI Mindanao Bureau

DAVAO CITY—An "accidental" law enforcer has been named one of the "Ten Outstanding Policewomen of the Philippines" for the year 2001.

A nursing graduate, PO2 Jo Anne Torrefranca, 34, was all set to be a city health officer when she found her real calling.

Torrefranca is receiving the award in Police Community Relations, for "exceptional service to women and children." She

ACCIDENTAL/A15

THE 'BROTHERHOOD'

Solons work out sharing scheme to end pork row

By Juliet L. Javellana

A "BROTHERHOOD system" has been worked out to end the squabble over the P34.8-billion infrastructure budget of the Department of Public Works and Highways.

Camarines Sur Rep. Rolando Andaya Jr., chair of the House appropriations committee, used this term in announcing the compromise agreement on the sharing of the contested fund that a House panel reached yesterday.

Under the brotherhood system that, Andaya said, was unanimously approved, congressional districts receiving more than P38 million worth of public works projects will have to contribute from 1 to 3 percent of the amount to the "poorer districts."

The contribution will be graduated, with districts that get P40 million giving up one percent, and those with bigger allocations, 3 percent.

According to Andaya, there are some districts that receive P100 million worth of public works projects.

"*Ayos na* (It's settled). Everybody happy," he said after the hour-long, closed-door meeting of the technical

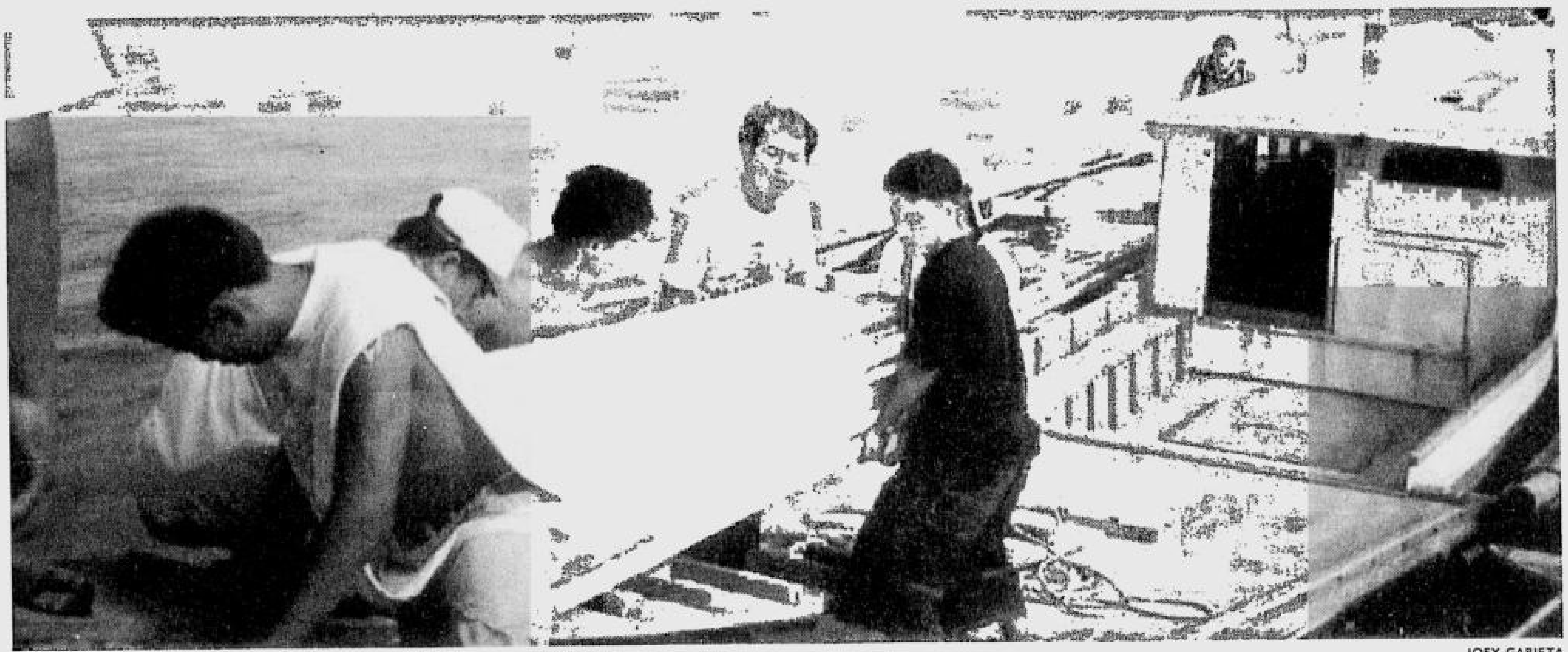
SOLONS/A18

SILA ANG MAY SALA!

BILIRAN SEA TRAGEDY

Coast Guard men face court martial

By Carlito Pablo
and Philip C. Tubeza


RESCUE workers return one of the victims of the Biliran sea tragedy to Maripipi island in a coffin.

JOEY GABIETA

PRESIDENT Macapagal-Arroyo yesterday castigated the Coast Guard for the sinking of an overloaded ferry in the waters off Biliran on Saturday, which resulted in 19 deaths.

The Coast Guard, for its part, began preparing court martial proceedings yesterday against four of its officers in Naval, Biliran, who allegedly let the crowded boat sail—even as the agency blamed local government officials for the sinking.

Vice Admiral Reuben Lista, Coast Guard chief, identified the CG personnel as Chief Petty Officer Romulo Mesias, Naval port detachment head, and Petty Officers II Jose Alamo, Jerry Gernaco and Peresito Toyosa.

Local execs' role

Lista said charges of dereliction of duty and negligence will be filed against them, with the possibility of criminal charges being filed later.

Lista said the Coast Guard is also studying filing charges against Lt. Alex Gemina, Tacloban City station chief, under the principle of command responsibility.

But Lista said that while the Coast Guard is investigating its own men, local government officials should also be questioned about their role in the tragedy.

He said the Coast Guard officers in Naval accused local officials of pressuring them into letting the overloaded boat sail.

A Coast Guard official told the INQUIRER the boat, the MT Nilode, was scheduled to leave Naval at 10 a.m. for Maripipi but its departure was moved to 2 p.m., then again to 4 p.m., because local officials wanted the boat to take on some 200 persons who were in Naval to celebrate Biliran's 10th anniversary.

"The boat was scheduled to leave at 10 a.m. with only 15 persons on its manifest, but there was a phone call and the boat was not allowed to leave," the official, who requested anonymity, said.

Angry president

The source said the call had come from certain local officials. He said the boat had a capacity of 30 persons but it sailed with more than 100 passengers. The other 100 persons who were left behind boarded another boat that left later, the source added.

An angry President Macapagal also fumed at claims by the Coast Guard, which is under the Department of Transportation and Communication, that it had been stripped of most of its regulatory powers and that it lacked funds.

"I don't know what regulatory powers it was stripped of. If the capacity (of the ferry) was 30 (persons) and 130 were on board, of course (a tragedy would happen)," the President said in her regular Monday radio interview.

"I asked (DOTC Secretary Pantaleon) Bebot Alvarez who is supposed to make sure that only 30 people got on board—the Coast Guard," Ms Macapagal said.

"Let them (CG officers) explain that because they have been charged," she said. "Let them use that as a defense if they want."

"What happened in Biliran was not due to lack of funds," she added. "If the personnel were there, why weren't they watching?" she said.

Commodore Miguel Tabares, Coast Guard head for Central and Eastern Visayas, said Masias and the other personnel at Naval will be suspended until the investigation into the incident is completed.

Marine inquiry

Tabares said the special board of marine inquiry that will investigate the MT Nilode tragedy was convened yesterday. The dates and locations of the hearings will be announced today.

Biliran Rep. Gerry Espina yesterday asked Secretary Alvarez to look into reports the Coast Guard in Naval had been bribed into allowing the boat to depart.

Espina said boat operators at Naval told Lista and Alvarez, who visited Naval on Sunday, that local CG personnel had been collecting P500 a week from them at the Naval wharf.

President Macapagal was scheduled to visit Maripipi Island today to condole with the families of the victims of the latest sea tragedy in the country.

All the 19 fatalities were residents of Maripipi who went to Naval, the provincial capital, to take part in the 10th founding anniversary of Biliran province. Maripipi is one hour and thirty minutes from Naval by boat.

Gov. Rogelio Espina, the congressman's son, said the President will fly to Maripipi tomorrow morning in a presidential helicopter, taking off from Tacloban City. She will be met by the Espinas and the town's officials, led by Maripipi Mayor Uldarico Macoron.

The President was in Naval only last Friday night to grace the coronation of the Miss Biliran beauty search, upon the invitation of Congressman Espina, chair of the powerful House committee on appointments. ***With reports from Jhunnex Napallacan, Joey A. Gabieta and Cynthia A. Borgueta, PDI Visayas Bureau, and AFP***

PPI honors RP's top community papers today

THE COUNTRY'S outstanding community newspapers will again take the center stage today when the winners in the Philippine Press Institute-Konrad Adenauer Stiftung Annual Community Press Awards are announced at the Century Park Hotel in Manila.

Already on its fifth year, the awards program honors community newspapers that have done outstanding work in editing, environmental reporting, business reporting, photojournalism and editorial writing.

The nominees and regional winners for this year's awards are: Weekly category—Balikas (Calabarzon), Sunday Punch (Dagupan City), Baguio Midland Courier (Baguio City), Bandillo ng Palawan (Puerto Princesa City), Southern Leyte Times (Maasin, Southern Leyte), and Sun.Star Davao Weekend (Davao City);

Daily category—Negros Daily Bulletin (Bacolod City), Sun.Star Cagayan de Oro (Cagayan de Oro City), Sun.Star Bacolod (Bacolod City), Cebu Daily News (Cebu City), The Visayan Daily Star (Bacolod City), The Mindanao Times (Davao City) and Mindanao Gold Star Daily (Cagayan de Oro City).

In the weekly category, Baguio Midland Courier and Sun.Star Davao Weekend received two nominations each for best in business and economic reporting and best edited paper.

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₱867M deposited in Velarde account in 9 months, court told

By Volt Contreras

IN A SPAN of nine months, some P867 million got deposited in the controversial Jose Velarde account at an Equitable PCI-Bank branch near the San Juan residence of deposed President Joseph Estrada.

This was according to 12 deposit receipts presented in court yesterday by government lawyers in the Estrada plunder trial, as they called to the stand the former manager of Equitable PCIB's Greenhills-Ortigas branch.

In his proffer of evidence, state prosecutor Dennis Villa-Ignacio drew the court's notice to the branch being "near North Greenhills subdivision," site of the ex-president's Polk Street home.

Off-court, he noted that while the Jose Velarde account was opened at the bank's Binondo branch, interbranch deposits to that account were recorded at the Greenhills branch from October 1999 to July 2000.

Defense exhibit

But Estrada's court-appointed lawyers made a major move yesterday in support of their client's insistence that he did not own the Velarde account.

They introduced as defense exhibit the Aug. 25, 1999 letter of Estrada businessman friend Jaime Dichaves to then PCIB senior vice president Romualdo Dee Tang, requesting the latter to open a savings and current account at the bank's Juan Luna, Binondo, branch.

The two accounts would be "for Jose Velarde, care of the undersigned (Dichaves)," the letter read, which Estrada lawyer Manuel Pamaran entered into court records during his cross examination of bank teller Glyzelyn Bejec.

Denial

When confronted with the letter, Bejec denied any knowledge of its existence. She earlier testified processing a P189.7-million check deposit for the Velarde account on Nov. 8, 1999.

"All banking transactions of Jose Velarde shall be coursed through the undersigned. Very truly yours, Jaime Dichaves," the letter further read.

The new defense exhibit was actually one of the documents contained in the fateful "second envelope" of the aborted Estrada impeachment trial, the non-opening of which triggered People Power 2. Yielding confidential bank records, the envelope was finally opened at the Senate days after his ouster.

In his "Ama ng Masa" propaganda video, whose television broadcast was banned by Malacañang last month, Estrada stressed the significance of this letter as proof that the account was not his but Dichaves.'

In interviews, Pamaran and co-defense counsels refused to say how they got a copy of the letter considering that, according to them, Estrada has not been cooperating with his counsels de oficio.

Villa-Ignacio downplayed the impact of the Dichaves letter, telling reporters that "as of now it's just a mere scrap of paper that needs to be authenticated."

In his direct examination of Teresa Barcelona, former branch manager of EPCIB's Greenhills-Ortigas branch and Bejec's boss, Villa-Ignacio had the witness confirm the following:

Check deposits

- That check deposits were made to the Velarde account totaling P867.8 million from Oct. 20, 1999 to July 25, 2000.
- The deposits were made on 12 different dates and in corresponding amounts—Oct. 20, 1999 (P143 million), Nov. 8 (P263.3 million), Nov. 22 (P40 million), Nov. 24 (P54.1 million), Nov. 25 (P20 million), Dec. 20 (P163.5 million), Dec. 29 (P2.5 million); Jan. 4, 2000 (P70.5 million), May 10 (P23 million), June 6 (P42.9 million) and July 25 (P40 million).

Villa-Ignacio later said off-court that the deposits involved "about 40 checks."

Erap's commission

These included the P189.7-million check Bejec testified on, and which allegedly represented Estrada's commission from the purchase of Belle Corp. shares by state pension agencies in October 1999, he said.

Barcelona's testimony resumes next Monday, as the court will devote tomorrow's hearing on Estrada's perjury case and the contempt petition filed by Plunderwatch.

Meanwhile, Estrada's wife, Sen. Luisa "Loi" Ejercito, is expected to be a no-show tomorrow in defiance of the Sandiganbayan subpoena issued to her in connection with the contempt charge.

Ferdie Ramos, the senator's media consultant, told court reporters that "her initial reaction upon learning of the summons was to ignore it, invoking her parliamentary immunity."

The court has also summoned Estrada, his co-accused son Jinggoy, and their former lawyers Rene Saguisag and Raymund Fortun for tomorrow's 8:30 a.m. hearing.

Plunderwatch had basically based its petition to cite Estrada et al for indirect contempt on INQUIRER stories quoting the respondents' tirades against the courts.

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PAF chief backs down, revives aviation school

AIR Force chief Lt. Gen. Benjamin Defensor yesterday vowed to continue the controversial Aviation Cadet Program.

The vow was made before a group of ACP alumni led by Air Reserve Command chief Maj. Gen. Nemesio Sigaya.

This was revealed by retired Capt. Amado Soliman, one of those who led the boycott of the air force homecoming on Saturday, in an interview yesterday with reporters.

According to Soliman, Defensor met with Sigaya's group from 7:30 to 11 a.m. yesterday at the Hall of Flags in Villamor Airbase.

"He's trying to make promises... he is going to revive the program," Soliman told defense reporters.

The ACP was scrapped in 1998 and replaced by the PAF's Officer Candidate School.

The OCS is being opposed by the ACP graduates who said that the OCS favors graduates of the Philippine Military Academy.

Most of the members of the five existing classes belong to the PMA, with PMA classes 2000 and 2001 forming two out of the five classes.

In a separate interview yesterday afternoon, Defensor reiterated that the ACP would be continued but appeared apologetic for not being able to push through with the program.

"I have already announced that the ACP is going to continue... the reason we could not push through (with it) is because there are existing classes in our flying school... when President Arroyo gave her guidance, so we cannot just push aside these classes," Defensor said.

"We're going to start the information campaign in a couple of months," he said, adding that they're going to start processing applicants within the period.

He did not elaborate and it was not clear if the OCS classes would be disbanded in the coming months. *Martin P. Marfil*

Gloria wants Ricky Martin in Clark

By Carlito Pablo

ONLY the biggest concert hall in the country will do for Puerto Rican pop superstar Ricky Martin's forthcoming Philippine concert. And that, President Macapagal-Arroyo believes, is the 2.8-hectare amphitheater in the controversial Centennial Expo theme park in Clark Field, Pampanga.

In her regular Monday radio interview, the President suggested that the concert promoters take a look at the 60-hectare park, which she ordered reopened on her birthday last month.

The park had cost the Ramos administration P3.5 billion to build. It opened June 6,1998 as part of the Independence Day Centennial celebrations, but operated for only one year due to poor ticket sales.

Because of the anomalous cost of construction, former Vice President Salvador Laurel, chair of the National Centennial Commission, and others involved in the project, have been charged with graft by the Office of the Ombudsman.

Ms Macapagal said she grabbed the chance to plug the theme park upon hearing that the sensational Latin singer-dancer was coming to town next month. "It's not my place to tell promoters how to do their job," she said, "but I'm sure they want maximum gate receipts."

The amphitheater seats 35,000—just perfect, Ms Macapagal supposes, for as many lovers of "La Vida Loca."

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RP population alarms World Bank

With birth rate outpacing growth, development is doomed, donors fear

By Clarissa Batino

FOREIGN donors led by the World Bank are alarmed with the increasing population of the Philippines and had set aside $20 million in assistance to revive a more aggressive population control program despite the continued resistance of the Catholic Church.

Dubbed as Maternal Health and Population Management Program, the multilateral-funded initiative set for implementation starting 2004 or 2005 will be the first in several decades since the government suspended its population control agenda in the 1970s due to religious pressures.

A senior official of the Department of Finance said that in the consultative meeting with foreign donors and creditors held last February, the foreign funding agencies had expressed alarm with the growing population of the Philippines.

The creditors and donors had warned that economic growth and poverty alleviation programs would be fruitless if the growth in population would spiral out of control, the finance official said.

Yet pressures from the Church had not eased and despite the urgency of the situation, the Macapagal administration appears to be putting on hold any population management program until after the 2004 presidential election.

The Church remains a substantial voting block in a country that is predominantly Catholic.

The National Statistics Office estimated that the country's population this year would reach 80,206,162, up from 76,755,914 at the turn of the century and from 68,349,452 in 1995.

At current growth rate, the Philippine population would hit 85,386,261 by 2005, growing at an average rate of 2.1 percent, way ahead of the average 1.4 percent growth in per capita gross national product.

At this rate, population will double in 34 years while per capita GNP would take 49 years to double. There had been years, said a finance official, when population growth had even outstripped growth in gross domestic product.

Currently, the Macapagal administration is implementing a low-profile program for responsible parenthood and prevention of teenage pregnancies. But the program is not being strongly implemented as the government tries not to offend the Church.

"In the last donors' meeting, everyone was concerned about population growth in the Philippines and that it is emerging as the biggest threat to sustainable economic growth," said the finance official.

While most donors were bullish about the Philippines' economic recovery, the increasing population and the government's seeming inaction on the problem were viewed with serious concern, said the official.

"The donors were satisfied about our macroeconomic prospects but the biggest threat they saw was population," said the finance official, explaining that any assistance to kickstart the economy would be useless if the rapid growth in population would not be arrested.

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IMPEACHMENT THREAT

Tancangco unfazed by raps

By Norman Bordadora

ELECTIONS Commissioner Luz Tancangco yesterday said she was unfazed by the threats of impeachment being lodged against her by the National Movement for Free Elections, the citizens' election watchdog group.

At the weekly Kapihan sa Manila Hotel, Tancangco said that her lawyer already told her that the actions being taken against her were covered by en banc resolutions of the Commission on Elections.

"My lawyer already told me that I committed no impeachable offense based on the supposed grounds being put forward by the Comelec," Tancangco said.

Tancangco is former chair of the Comelec modernization committee and is an advocate of the controversial Voters Registration and Identification System (VRIS).

She was appointed to her post by ousted President Joseph Estrada and has been a thorn in the side of Comelec chair Alfredo Benipayo, President Macapagal-Arroyo's appointee.

Jose Bernas, Namfrel chief counsel, said the summary of charges will be distributed to non-government organizations, schools and other civil society groups, and will be released through electronic mail as well.

Namfrel has charged Tancangco with inefficiency and gross inexcusable negligence, and betrayal of public trust for allegedly wasting millions of pesos in modernization funds that are unaccounted for.

In its charge sheet, Namfrel said Tancangco failed to implement the automation of the vote count in the May 2001 elections, showed "unjustified bias" for a multibillion-peso consortium that won the bidding for the VRIS, and incurred illegal expenses for the precinct-mapping project.

Citing Commission on Audit reports, Namfrel said Tancangco used P282 million of the P500-million budget for precinct mapping last year, but only 3.3 percent of the maps prepared were considered to be in order by the Comelec elections and barangay affairs bureau.

Tancangco also allegedly authorized the release of P41 million to non-bonded employees and failed to account for P56 million that she released supposedly in conjunction with the precinct-mapping project.

The controversial commissioner also caused the Comelec to acquire P46.4-million worth of Polaroid camera equipment in 1999 for the coverage of the elections in the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao, even if there would be no subsequent use for the cameras.

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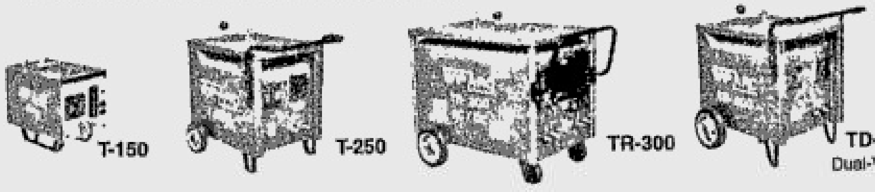

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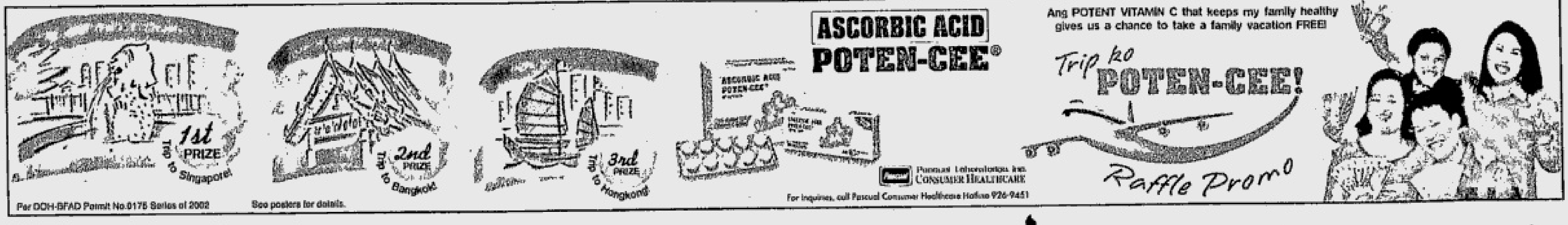
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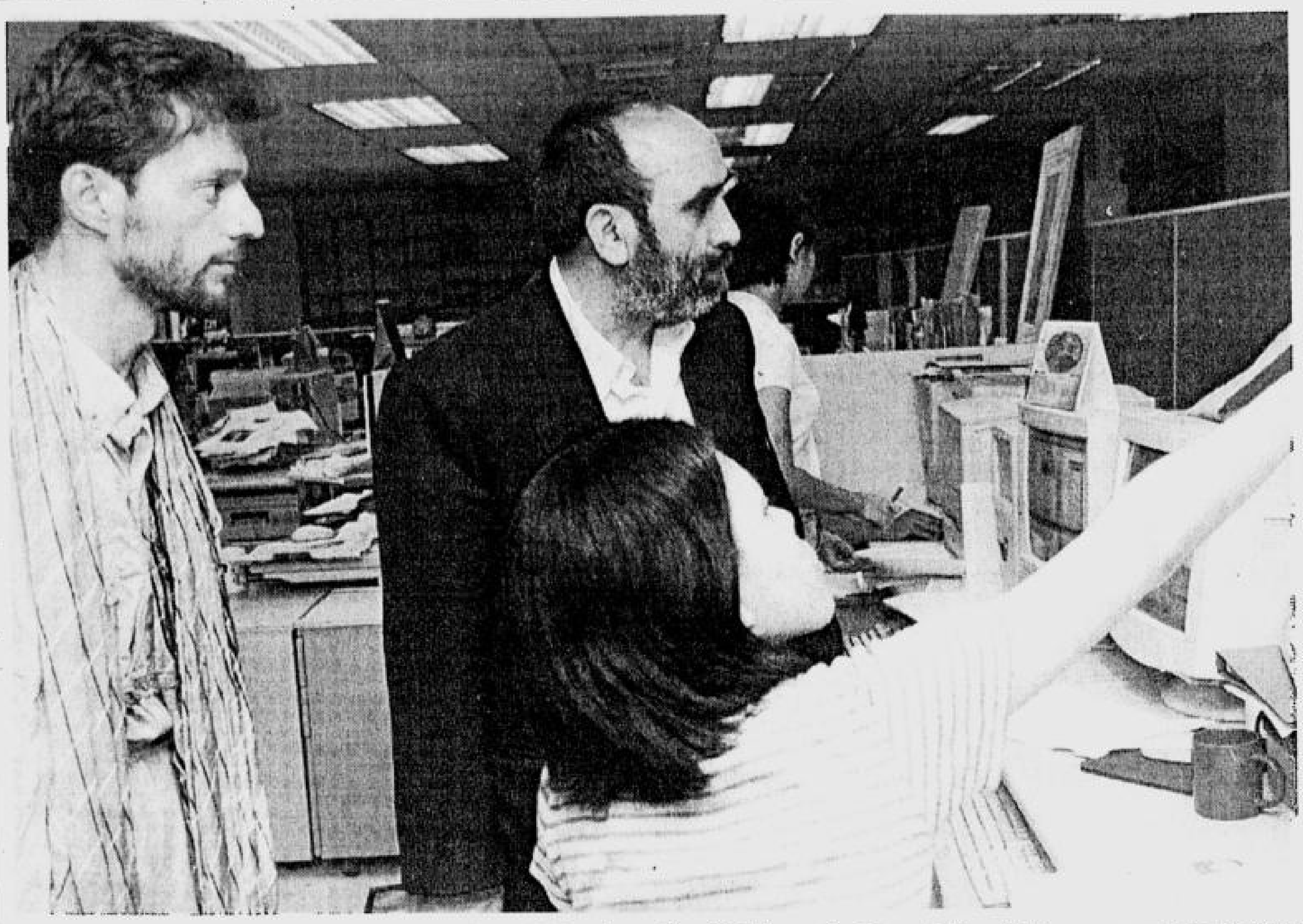

INQUIRER editorial assistant Michelle Remo shows Afghan journalists M. Faheem Dashty and Ahmad Baheem around the INQUIRER office during their recent visit.

ERNIE SARMIENTO

2 Afghan journalists hail RP press

By TJ Burgonio

TWO visiting Afghan journalists have hailed Philippine media for being "really free," saying it would be a good model for their own country.

Sultan Ahmad Baheem and M. Faheem Dashty were in Manila for the recent World Press Freedom Day Conference on Terrorism and Media. They were the first journalists sent abroad under the government of interim leader Hamid Karzai.

The two toured the PDI offices the day before they flew back to Kabul. Browsing through copies of the INQUIRER and other national dailies, the 47-year-old Baheen, director general of the government-run Bakhter News Agency, said, "We notice that Filipino journalists can do anything they want."

Dashty, 29, editor in chief of the "Kabul Weekly," agreed. "We hope that someday the Afghan press will be as free as yours," he said.

The two related that throughout the five-year Taliban regime, media were under "strict" control. Only three state-run newspapers, including the Taliban's Sharia Law, circulated. A single radio station operated, and all broadcasts were about the Taliban.

"Women journalists were dismissed," Baheen said. "Most of the journalists were dismissed. Taliban leaders became newspaper editors and managers of the radio station. Bakhter was the source of all news."

Baheen used to be Bakhter's deputy director general, and Dashty was "Kabul Weekly's" chief journalist. Both stopped working during the Taliban years, and resumed work only this year.

Two months ago, Karzai's interim government passed the Law of the Press, lifting the five-year ban on mass media, including television, cinema, and theater. At present, there are more than 80 newspapers and magazines in Afghanistan.

"But," Baheen said, "we are starting again from zero."

If the international community wants to help Afghanistan, he added, "They should support our media. It's only the media that can change the mindset of the warlords, politicians, businessmen, and all the people in our country, and make them want to have a really democratic society.

US engineers can overstay, says Palace

THE PHILIPPINES is amenable to letting American military engineers stay longer in Basilan to complete projects aimed at boosting the fight against the Abu Sayyaf, the Agence France Presse, quoting a ranking government official, reported yesterday.

According to National Security Adviser Roilo Golez, "there won't be much of a problem" regarding calls to extend the deployment of United States military engineers after the joint exercises between the two countries formally ends in July.

"They have projects that must be completed. These projects could be affected by bad weather in Basilan (if left unfinished.) And what we have started, we must finish," Golez said in a radio interview.

Golez stressed the US deployment in Basilan was not being extended just to rescue Martin and Gracia Burnham, an American missionary couple held hostage by the Abu Sayyaf for almost a year.

"We have always emphasized that the reason for all these is to boost the capacity of our military to fight international terrorism and not just to rescue the Burnhams," Golez said.

The Abu Sayyaf is believed by both the Philippine and US governments to have links to the al-Qaida network of Osama bin Laden, the suspected mastermind of the Sept. 11 terror attacks on America.

Abu pursuit

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NEXT PNP CHIEF

Gloria vouches for Ebdane

By Carlito Pablo

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"They called for action, not publicity. Why? Is Ebdane publicity hungry?" the President said during her regular Monday radio interview.

Mendoza, who played a major role in Edsa 2, was originally scheduled to retire last March but his term was extended. The President had announced in advance that Ebdane will be next in line.

National Security Adviser Roilo Golez said that protests over Ebdane's appointment are "part of the intramurals" in the PNP, which he noted as nothing new.

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Villanueva will retire on May 20 and the President has named AFP Southern Command chief Lt. Gen. Roy Cimatu as his replacement.

Ms Macapagal had earlier expressed her preference to name AFP Southern Luzon Command chief Maj. Gen. Ernesto Carolina as Cimatu's replacement at Southcom.

Senate to probe peace pact

By Cynthia D. Balana

THE SENATE will scrutinize the peace agreement between the government and the Moro Islamic Liberation Front because some of its features have raised serious concern.

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The agreement was signed last week during the state visit of President Macapagal-Arroyo to Malaysia where she had a meeting with Prime Minister Mohamad Mahathir.

Ople said that while the report was welcome as a possible harbinger for peace in Mindanao, some provisions in the agreement must be thoroughly reviewed.

He cited in particular the provision returning Camp Abubakar and some 40 other MILF military camps to the breakaway army.

ILO praises RP's 'decent work' plan

By Blanche S. Rivera

AMID the clamor of local workers for better wages and working conditions, the Philippines has been chosen by the International Labor Organization to be one of four countries to pioneer the ILO's Action Program for Decent Work.

Along with Denmark, Morocco and Bangladesh, the Philippines will follow an ILO-guided framework to improve labor conditions in the country in the next three years.

The ILO defines decent work as "the converging focus of the four strategic objectives of the ILO—rights at work, employment, social protection and social dialogue."

"(It) would be a great opportunity to pursue meaningful changes in the areas of labor and employment policies and their administration," said Labor Secretary Patricia Sto. Tomas in a speech yesterday.

Sto. Tomas and ILO Director Werner Blenk, along with representatives of employers and workers groups, signed a joint statement of support during the launching of the Decent Work Action Program: Philippines at the Manila Hotel yesterday.

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The labor groups alleged the government was trying to control labor disputes, especially in multinational companies, to protect the foreign investors at the expense of local workers' rights and benefits.

An ILO summary report of the Philippine Action Program for Decent Work showed that only 28 percent of the country's 33 million work force are enrolled in the Social Security System, while only five percent are covered by the Government Service Insurance System.

"Safety hazards threaten the health of a large number of Filipino workers, most especially rural workers and those in the informal sector who have low access to social protection," the ILO summary said.

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The United Nations Children's Fund estimated that at least 20,000 Filipino children are active in the sex industry, but children's advocacy groups say the number is from 60,000 to 100,000.

"We face a very difficult task of promoting decent work in the country, but we are armed with the right partners, the will and resolve to make it our responsibility to realize our goals," Sto. Tomas said.

Solon files resolution for con-con

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There are 209 districts in the country.

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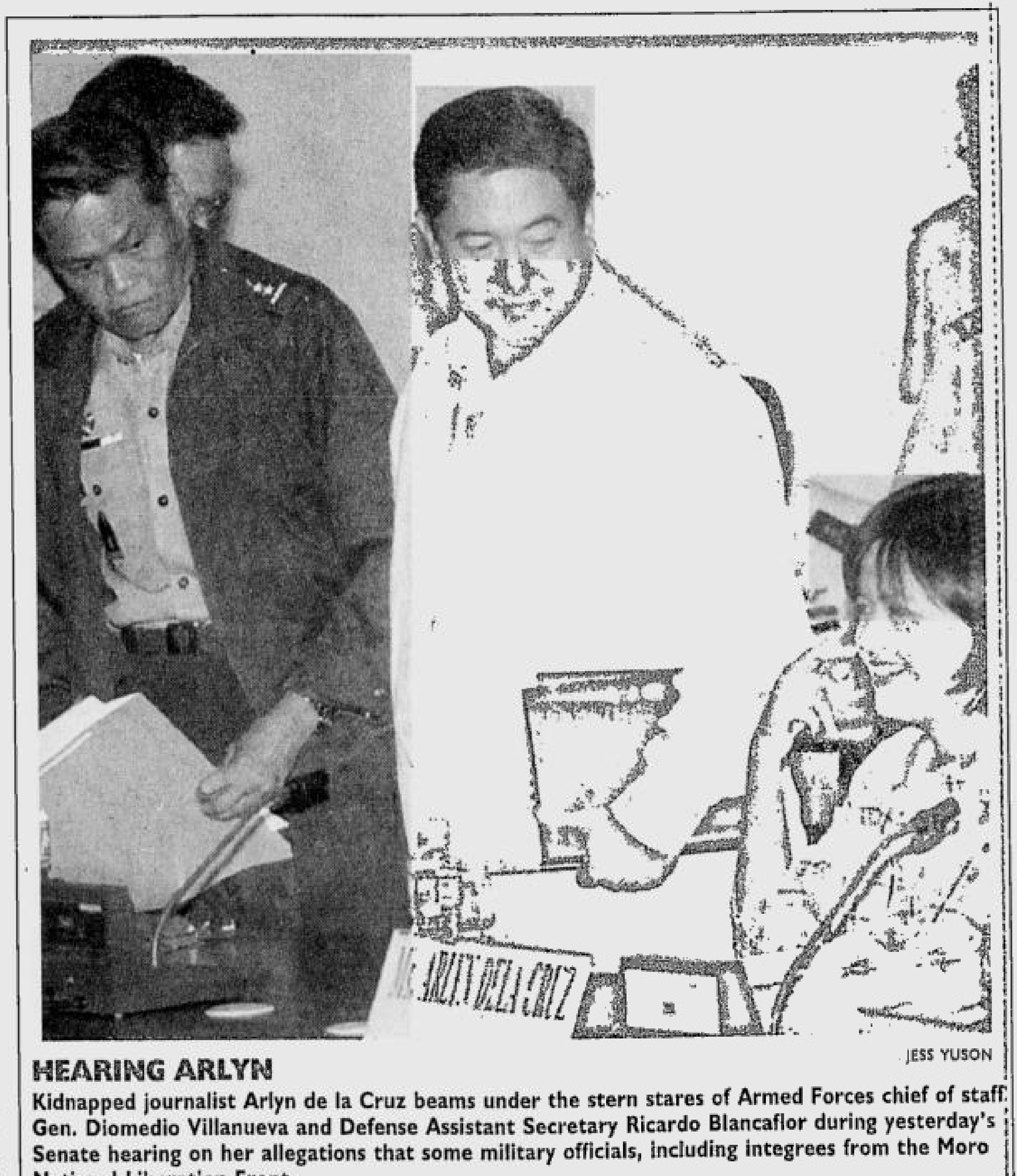

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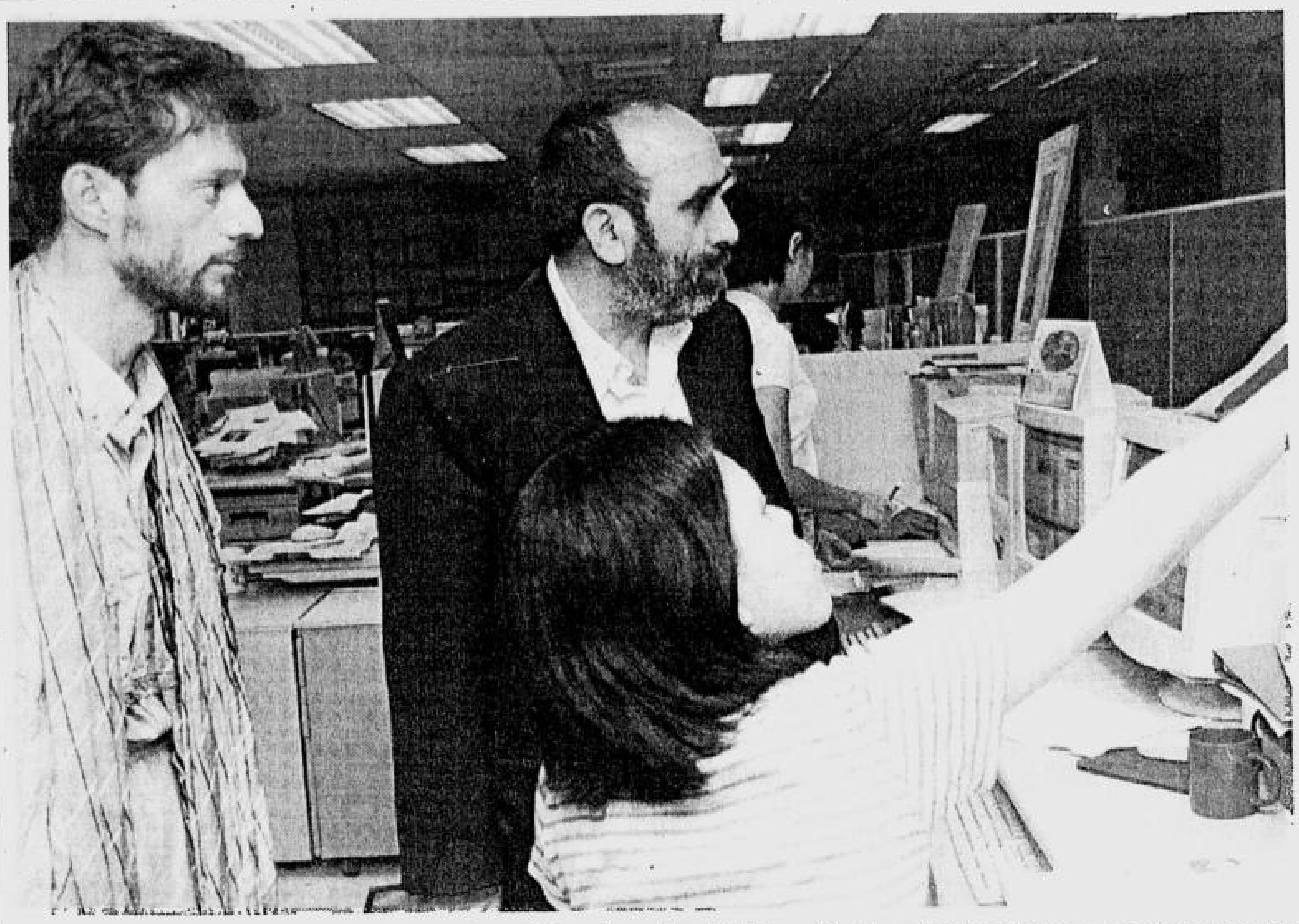

INQUIRER editorial assistant Michelle Remo shows Afghan journalists M. Faheem Dashty and Ahmad Baheem around the INQUIRER office during their recent visit.

ERNIE SARMIENTO

2 Afghan journalists hail RP press

By TJ Burgonio

TWO visiting Afghan journalists have hailed Philippine media for being "really free," saying it would be a good model for their own country.

Sultan Ahmad Baheem and M. Faheem Dashty were in Manila for the recent World Press Freedom Day Conference on Terrorism and Media. They were the first journalists sent abroad under the government of interim leader Hamid Karzai.

The two toured the PDI offices the day before they flew back to Kabul. Browsing through copies of the INQUIRER and other national dailies, the 47-year-old Baheen, director general of the government-run Bakhter News Agency, said, "We notice that Filipino journalists can do anything they want."

Dashty, 29, editor in chief of the "Kabul Weekly," agreed. "We hope that someday the Afghan press will be as free as yours," he said.

The two related that throughout the five-year Taliban regime, media were under "strict" control. Only three state-run newspapers, including the Taliban's Sharia Law, circulated. A single radio station operated, and all broadcasts were about the Taliban.

"Women journalists were dismissed," Baheen said. "Most of the journalists were dismissed. Taliban leaders became newspaper editors and managers of the radio station. Bakhter was the source of all news."

Baheen used to be Bakhter's deputy director general, and Dashty was "Kabul Weekly's" chief journalist. Both stopped working during the Taliban years, and resumed work only this year.

Two months ago, Karzai's interim government passed the Law of the Press, lifting the five-year ban on mass media, including television, cinema, and theater. At present, there are more than 80 newspapers and magazines in Afghanistan.

"But," Baheen said, "we are starting again from zero."

If the international community wants to help Afghanistan, he added, "They should support our media. It's only the media that can change the mindset of the warlords, politicians, businessmen, and all the people in our country, and make them want to have a really democratic society.

US engineers can overstay, says Palace

THE PHILIPPINES is amenable to letting American military engineers stay longer in Basilan to complete projects aimed at boosting the fight against the Abu Sayyaf, the Agence France Presse, quoting a ranking government official, reported yesterday.

According to National Security Adviser Roilo Golez, "there won't be much of a problem" regarding calls to extend the deployment of United States military engineers after the joint exercises between the two countries formally ends in July.

"They have projects that must be completed. These projects could be affected by bad weather in Basilan (if left unfinished.) And what we have started, we must finish," Golez said in a radio interview.

Golez stressed the US deployment in Basilan was not being extended just to rescue Martin and Gracia Burnham, an American missionary couple held hostage by the Abu Sayyaf for almost a year.

"We have always emphasized that the reason for all these is to boost the capacity of our military to fight international terrorism and not just to rescue the Burnhams," Golez said.

The Abu Sayyaf is believed by both the Philippine and US governments to have links to the al-Qaida network of Osama bin Laden, the suspected mastermind of the Sept. 11 terror attacks on America.

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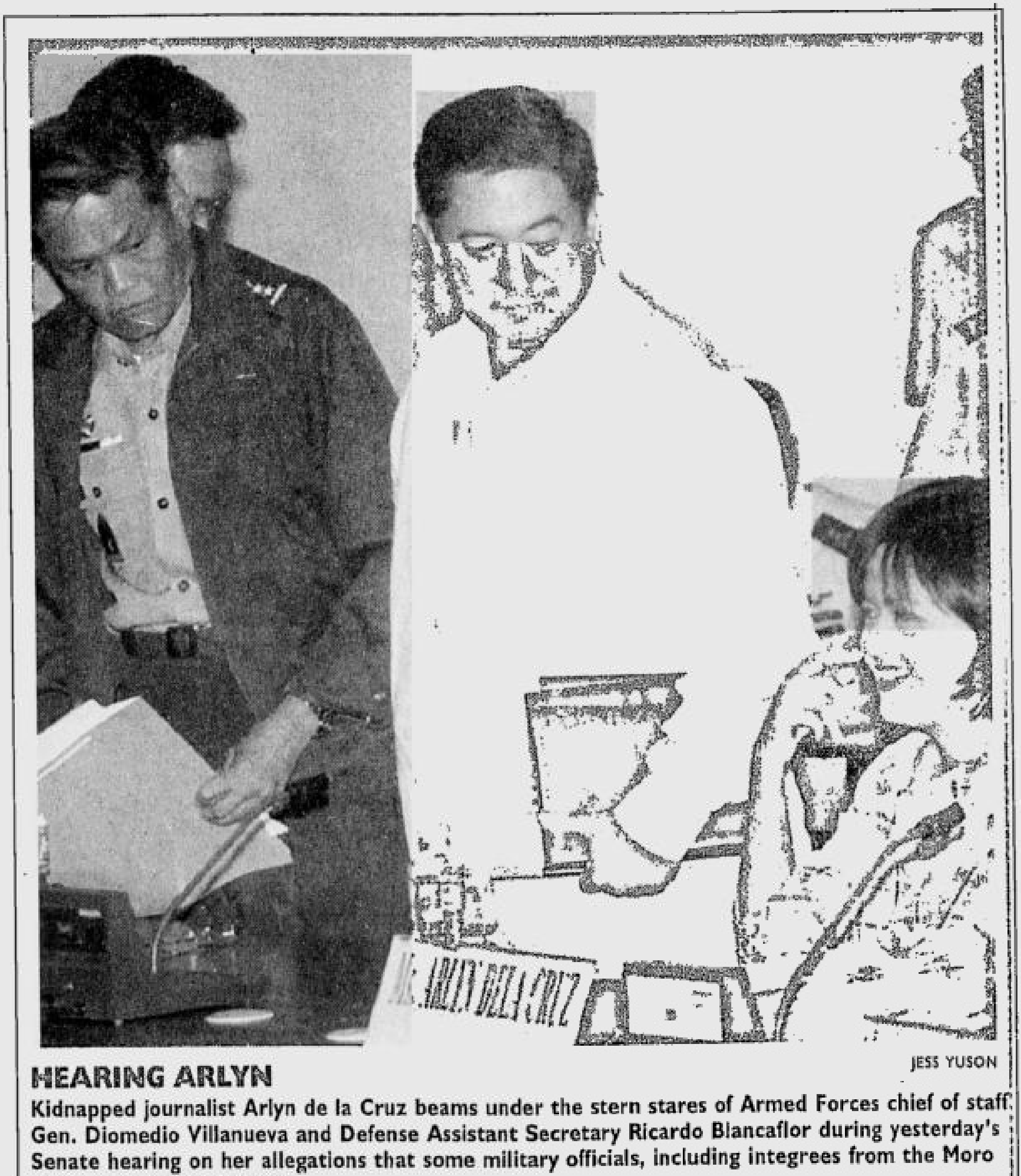

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Piatco 'point man' a dummy, says Yasay

By Norman Bordadora

JUST who is Alfonso Liongson?

The mysterious "point man" for the Philippine International Air Terminal Co. (Piatco), who allegedly earns $200,000 a month to obtain government and media concessions for the airport Terminal 3 contractor, appears to be a small businessman with a modest bank account and no significant real property.

According to the Miaa/Naia Association of Service Organizations (Maso), a credit investigation on Liongson showed that he hales from Bacolor, Pampanga, which lahar erased from the map, is a former medical representative, an unassuming golfer and a Rotarian.

But in the words of former Securities and Exchange Commission chair Perfecto Yasay, "he is dummy material."

Yasay, now chair of Maso, whose members are Naia Terminal 1 concessionaires who will be displaced by Piatco's Terminal 3, said at a press conference yesterday: "We have reason to believe he is a dummy for corrupt government officials."

Maso has repeatedly attacked the validity of the multibillion-dollar build-operate-transfer contract awarded to Piatco for the construction of Naia Terminal 3.

But a spokesperson for Transportation Secretary Pantaleon Alvarez said Yasay must be so desperate that "he continues to be haunted by ghosts and goblins of his own making."

In a press statement, Ramon Cuyco, spokesperson of the Department of Transportation and Communication, said Yasay's new allegation was "the latest distortion of facts by a paid hack with an eye for the 2004 senatorial elections."

Cuyco accused Yasay and his "MASO benefactors" of harboring witnesses against Alvarez to block his confirmation at the Commission on Appointments and "paying them handsomely for their services and the lies the could peddle."

Lawyer Moises Tolentino, Piatco spokesperson, denied any payoffs to government officials.

In a telephone interview with the INQUIRER, Tolentino said Piatco needs Liongson's services, but paying off corrupt bureaucrats was not one of them.

"I don't know where this (allegation) came from but the government had nothing to do with our hiring Mr. Liongson and how much we are paying him. This is a purely internal prerogative," Tolentino said.

Tolentino said Yasay and Maso were desperate to link Liongson to somebody in government.

"They tried to link him to First Gentleman Mike Arroyo because they both belonged to the same Rotary Club. After that was denied, they tried to link him to Transportation Secretary Pantaleon Alvarez," Tolentino said.

"(Liongson) is just one of our many consultants," he added.

Yasay said Liongson was born on Jan. 26, 1939 in Bacolor. He reportedly owns DM Trading and Industrial Services and lives at 3290 Dungo St., Parañaque City. His other address is 2330 Guijo St., United Hills Village, Parañaque.

He is a former medical representative for United Laboratories Inc. who rose to become assistant vice president for corporate affairs from 1989 to 1999.

Yasay said Maso's inquiry into Liongson's personal and business dealings revealed neither criminal nor civil liability.

"My friends in the Rotary say he is a very unassuming person. He has no criminal record. There are no controversies connected to him. That makes him a perfect dummy candidate," Yasay said.

Liongson reportedly has an agriculture degree from the University of the Philippines at Los Baños and a master's degree in business administration from the Pamantasan ng Lungsod ng Maynila.

The INQUIRER tried to call Liongson at his home yesterday, but the phone went unanswered and at other times was busy.

"Yasay must be totally desperate that he continues to be haunted by ghosts and goblins of his own making," said Department of Trade and Communications spokesperson Ramon Cuyco.

Cuyco accused Yasay and Maso of trying to derail Alvarez's confirmation as DOTC secretary before the Commission on Appointments because of his former links to Piatco.

Maso, Cuyco said, is billeting witnesses who will testify against Alvarez when he next faces the CA.

"They are being housed at the Chartered House in Makati. They are also being paid handsomely for their services and the lies they would peddle," Cuyco said in a statement.

CONSUMER & OIL PRICE WATCH

-Private Sector-

SO THE PUBLIC MAY KNOW

PART IV - REDUCED PPA CHARGES - A BIG RELIEF TO ALL

We thank President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo for lowering the National Power Corporation's purchased power adjustment cost (NAPOCOR PPA). We also thank the Energy Regulatory Commission (ERC) for suspending the PPA charges of MERALCO on the power that they purchase from their affiliated independent power producers (IPPs).

By next month or the July billing, all electricity users will enjoy a reduction in their electric power bills as follows:

1. **RESIDENTIAL USERS - P1.15 per kWh.** This consists of the reduction in the NAPOCOR PPA of 85 centavos (from P1.25 to 40 centavos) and the 30-centavo reduction under the Power Reform Act reflected in electricity bills since July 1, 2001.
2. **COMMERCIAL & INDUSTRIAL USERS - P0.85 per kWh.** This is the reduction in the NAPOCOR PPA.

The 85-centavo NAPOCOR rate reduction will become permanent when the ERC acts on the petition of PSALM (Power Sector Asset and Liability Management Corp.) for a universal charge of 40 centavos per kWh.

PSALM Universal Charge and NAPOCOR Unbundling Power Rate Petition must be decided before June 26th.

For all of us to enjoy the benefit of the PPA reduction permanently, we strongly support the following:

1. For Congress to pass the Amendments to the Power Industry Reform Act with certain modifications before its adjournment on June 6.
2. For the Energy Regulatory Commission (ERC) to act on the unbundling of the power rate petition of NAPOCOR and the petition of PSALM for a universal charge of 40 centavos before the petition of MERALCO and the other 139 distribution utility companies can be acted upon.
3. For the three-man inter-agency committee to submit a partial list of the 47 IPP contracts deemed blatantly onerous and for government to **immediately renegotiate the contracts in a transparent manner, with the public promptly and properly informed.**

GOOD NEWS

Despite the oil price hike expected this month, prices of basic commodities will not increase for the following reasons:

1. **The oil companies should temper their price increase to a maximum 56 centavos, and not by P1 per liter, this month.**

   We are appealing to the oil companies that the average oil price increase this month should not exceed 56 centavos per liter (53-centavo price increase in May plus only 3 centavos under-recovery in April).

   Our computation for the price increase for this month is the same as that announced by one of the big three oil companies. Where we differ is their under-recovery of the previous month of 48 centavos or a total of P1 per liter compared to our 56 centavos.

   We showed the oil companies our computation from October to April which highlighted significant over-recoveries from the consumers. It was only in March and April, when they increased oil prices by P1.19 did the delayed over-charge to consumers even out or become "patas na".
2. **Manufacturers of basic commodities have committed NOT to increase prices.**

   Manufacturers of basic commodities have assured the DTI - National Price Coordinating Council that they will not increase prices. Indeed, a survey of 35 wet markets and 10 supermarkets show only minimal increases, and in fact, declines, in prices of basic commodities. Prices of 7 basic commodities decreased while 5 had minimal increase compared to September last year.
3. **No increase in transport fares, shipping rates, and hauling charges.**

   We do not expect any increase in transport fares, shipping rates and hauling charges as these sectors did not roll back their fares last year when there was a substantial drop in oil prices.
4. **No increase in power rates.**

   With the reduction of NAPOCOR's purchased power adjustment cost (PPA), power rates will definitely not increase.
5. **The peso has strengthened to below P50.**

   Finally, the appreciation of the peso (to below P50 per US dollar) and the lowering of the PPA have been a great relief to consumers as they will have more money to spend for the tuition fees of their children and other necessities.

   For the industrial sector, the peso appreciation and the lowering of the PPA will bring down their cost of raw materials and make our industries more globally competitive.

A public service message of:

CONCEPCION INDUSTRIES

RAUL T. CONCEPCION
Chairman

For comments or suggestions, call 844-8785, 812-6751 to 62; Fax: 818-6203 & 818-6503
Email address: rtc@CII.mozcom.com

Its price.

Its features.

Its screen size.

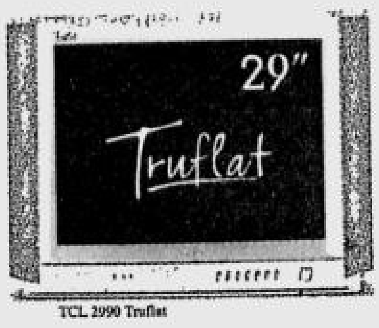
Introducing the TCL 29" TVs. Big on everything but the price. Using our unique "hybrid technology," we're able to produce 5 different models of the TCL 29" TV in the most cost-effective way possible. **That's the Difference.** In fact, you can buy a model packed with state-of-the-art features at the price of the competition's 21-inch set. Take your pick at your favorite appliance store before we run out of supply. Again.

TCL 2909 Classic

TCL 2911 Superflat

TCL 2916 Superflat

TCL 2975 Superflat



TCL 2990 Truflat

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Technology that Conquers Limitations

Eugenia D. Apostol
Founding Chairman

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A reckoning

EDITORIAL

IT'S ABOUT time that the National Movement for Free Elections (Namfrel) filed an impeachment complaint against Comelec Commissioner Luzviminda Tancangco for inefficiency and gross negligence and betrayal of public trust. The complaint will at least force a reckoning in the Comelec that has been paralyzed by petty bickering arising out of, it now appears, disgraceful political partisanship.

The Namfrel complaint of course does not state that Tancangco is guilty of partisanship, which is not a basis for impeachment. But if we are to go by her seeming manic drive to stall and even undermine the vote computerization project as well as other programs to modernize the election system, she seems determined to wreck the Commission on Elections just because it is headed by an appointee of the new government. As it is, Tancangco is an appointee of jailed President Joseph Estrada; she was recommended to the job by Raul de Guzman, her mentor at the UP School of Public Administration and an Estrada relative and adviser.

Tancangco does not hide her partisanship. Along with three other Estrada-appointed commissioners, she has consistently boycotted meetings called by Chair Alfredo Benipayo. She seems forever demanding appeasement and rapprochement for actual or perceived wrongs done to her. She and the other commissioners seem to forget that they are there not to be pleased but to work for honest elections. On the basis alone of their absenteeism from commission meetings and their non-cooperation with the new chair, Alfredo Benipayo, they have already violated their oath of office and are thus impeachable.

Namfrel has moved to impeach Tancangco for allegedly wasting millions of pesos in modernization funds unaccounted for. She has also allegedly shown "unjustified bias" for a multimillion-peso consortium that has won the project. In addition, she has allegedly incurred illegal expenses for the precinct-mapping project.

Based on Commission on Audit reports, Tancangco has apparently used P282 million of the P500-million budget for precinct mapping last year. But only 3.3 percent of the maps prepared were considered in order by the Comelec elections and barangay affairs bureau.

Moreover, it is said that Tancangco authorized the release of P41 million to non-bonded employees and failed to account for the P56 million that she had ordered released for the precinct-mapping project. She also allegedly caused to be acquired P46.4 million worth of Polaroid equipment in 1999 for the election in the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao when there was no subsequent use for them.

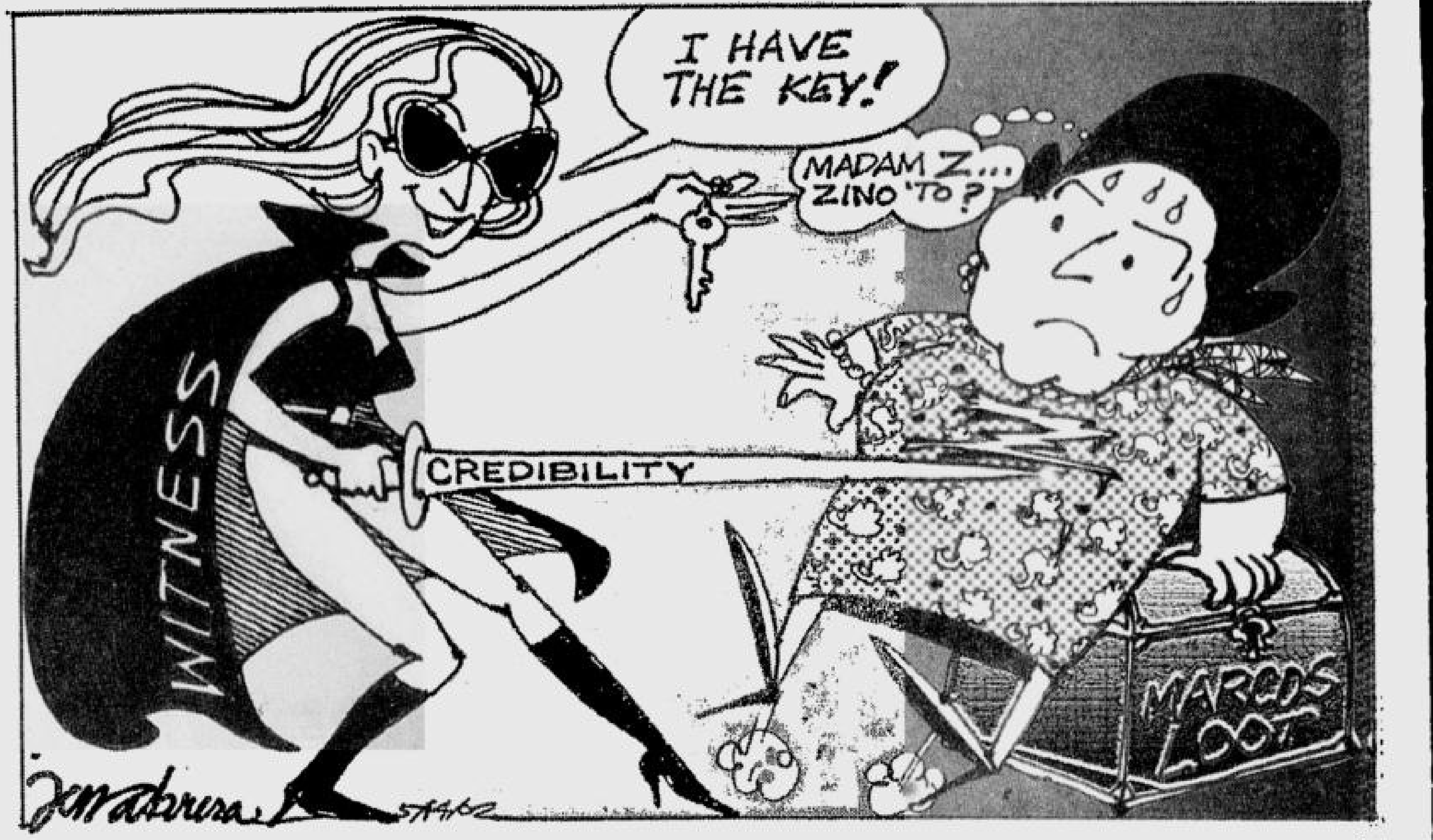
Tancangco has denied most of the accusations, calling them rehashed and politically motivated. But in some instances, she has said that even if she committed all of these things (such as the release of funds to non-bonded employees, which she said was merely "ministerial" on her part), she could not be impeached. She said she had already addressed the charges in Congress.

What should be noted here is that she appears shielded by the same Congress that has a sizable opposition loyal to her former political sponsor. This can be gleaned from the humiliating bypass that Benipayo has suffered from the Commission on Appointments, where the minority representation has harped on his alleged poor leadership and his failure to unite the Comelec.

During his appointment hearings for instance, Benipayo was taken to task by Sen. Edgardo Angara for failing to unite the factions in the Comelec. The lawmaker ordered the factions to kiss and make up or else. Benipayo has suffered the "or else" part. But Tancangco? She does not feel compelled to make efforts at a reconciliation because her appointment was confirmed during the former administration. Nor do the three other commissioners in her faction feel compelled to do so. Their appointments were also approved during the former regime.

If a politically tentative Congress cannot discipline the Comelec factions, who else can? Namfrel is hoping it will have the numbers to press the impeachment campaign. It seeks to gather enough signatures to compel Congress to accept the impeachment charge sheet. It will be an uphill battle.

But the battle will be worth it. At stake is the independence of the Comelec and the transparency and credibility of our elections.



Port costs in Manila lowest in Asia-Pacific

As I See It

Neal H. Cruz

THE PORT of Manila is in an uproar again as international and domestic shipping lines wage a campaign to roll back port and cargo handling charges. The Philippine Ports Authority, after public hearing, approved a total of 25 percent increase in cargo handling tariff in two stages: one in February 2001 and the other in January 2002. The Association of International Shipping Lines (AISL), joined by the Coalition for Ports Modernization, is demanding the scrapping of this 25 percent increase. It contributes to the higher prices of goods that pass through the port of Manila, they said.

(The AISL is an industry trade group of foreign shipping line operators and shipping line agencies. They promote their common interest, as in this case, work together to prevent their paying higher port charges.

(The Coalition for Ports Modernization is a loose grouping of former domestic shipping line executives, traders and members of the academe. They espouse certain transport concepts such as the promotion of roll-on-roll-off transport systems. They first came to notice when they advocated having multiple terminal operators in North Harbor.)

The port operator, the International Container Terminal Services Inc. (ICTSI) at the Manila International Container Terminal (MICT), denies that port tariff raises transportation cost. It is the shipping line charges that is the biggest component of transportation costs.

Shipping lines typically charge 20 to 30 percent on long routes, while the port operators charges only from 1 to 2 percent. Added to the exporter's or importer's costs are trucking charges of approximately P3,500 per 20-foot equivalent unit (TEU). Trucking charges are not regulated, whereas port charges are strictly regulated.

International shipping lines enjoy price adjustment mechanisms where they can increase charges to respond to changes in the industry, recoup losses and react to market forces, an advantage that port operators don't enjoy.

In the Philippines, the PPA regulates port tariffs. There are no regular reviews of port-tariff levels. A cargo handler or terminal operator applies for a tariff increase; the PPA holds public hearings among port users; approval from the Office of the President is sought; the revised tariff is implemented.

A survey of 21 ports in the Asia-Pacific region showed that the port of Manila has the lowest port costs. Said the Escap study:

"In terms of the total port costs based on nominal exchange rates, the 3,000 TEU class hypothetical container ship costs least in the port of Manila, among 21 ports included in the analysis. The Port of Yokohama appears to be the highest, costing more than six times the costs of Manila, as charged in nominal US dollar terms. The costs of the ports of Hong Kong, Singapore, Sydney, Yangon are more than three times as high as the port of Manila."

So what are the AISL and the port coalition complaining about?

It must be pointed out that the costs of any cargo rises the longer a ship stays in port because of demurrages. The cargo, therefore, must be loaded or unloaded as speedily as possible so that the ship can turn around and sail. How can that be done in a port that has no equipment and facilities for cargo handling as at the North Harbor? One crane costs tens of millions of pesos. A modern port needs a big cargo handler with big capital. But at the North Harbor, there are at least seven small cargo handlers. So loading and unloading of cargo is very slow. And that is what drives up costs.

Fortunately, at the MICT, the cargo handler is a big, world-class operator with big capital, the ICTSI. It has invested P8.4 billion at the MICT for infrastructure, port equipment, computer equipment and other improvements. An additional P1.1 billion was invested in systems development. Two new quay cranes are expected to be delivered this July, plus three rubber-tired gantries at a cost of P615 million. About P150 million is being used to develop an empty container depot which will be operational in August.

The results of these massive investments all redound to the benefit of port users—the shipping lines and the importers and exporters.

When the ICTSI took over at the MICT in 1988, the turnaround time of vessels was 48 hours. Now it is only 12 hours. The turnaround time of trucks in 1988 was 3.5 hours. Now it is 45 minutes. The crane productivity in 1988 was almost nil. The two cranes of the port were not even operational. The ICTSI refurbished them and bought eight new ones. The current average is now 30 moves per hour. The annual capacity of the MICT in 1988 was 350,000 TEUs (20-foot container van units). Now it is 1.5 million TEUs.

All of these improvements cost money, plenty of it. The port operator gets it back from those who use the port, the shipping lines and exporters/importers. But they don't want to pay.

Compare the speed, or lack of speed, of cargo handling at the South Harbor and the MICT. Do they want the cargo handling at MICT to be that slow?

Not a very good idea

There's the Rub

Conrado de Quiros

I AGREE with the premise of Sen. Aquilino Pimentel's proposed bill. Many public officials and private citizens have been unjustly maligned by the mass media in stories and commentaries. Sometimes the reasons for it are completely unpleasant. The reporter or opinion writer has an ax to grind and depicts his victim in an unflattering light from sheer ill will. It is not always easy to get redress from this by filing a libel charge. Quite apart from the cost and tortuousness of any legal procedure, it is not the easiest thing in the world to prove malice, which is the only way a libel suit may prosper.

The more common reason is sloppiness. People get maligned unjustly because the reporter or opinion writer did not bother to check his facts, or to get the other side. This is not always due to the pressures of deadline, or to being compelled to make do with what one has for lack of time. It is often due to sheer laziness. If we are to believe the Philippine Journalism Review, which publicizes the lapses in reporting by various newspapers, this happens more often than we realize, or care to admit.

I myself have had occasion to criticize people and institutions only to realize later on how wrong I was. I normally apologize on these occasions, and seek to rectify my error, though I quite realize that the harm can never be entirely repaired. One of those occasions was when I criticized the Philippine Center for Investigative Journalism during its seeming row with the Inquirer a couple of years ago. I issued an apology then, though it was regarded as somewhat anemic by one of my friends there. I reiterate that apology unequivocally again.

I do appreciate the sentiments of the aggrieved. Some years ago, I had occasion to defend someone who was accused by a fellow columnist in the Inquirer of monumental corruption while serving as an official of the Bureau of Internal Revenue. I knew this person to be a stickler for rules. He in fact helped to build a strong case of tax fraud against Lucio Tan despite the advice, or warning, of friends and colleagues that it was not good for his health. The accusation left him in a state of devastation and demoralization. It also made him fear for his life and those of his children, as the false advertisement of having hundreds of millions in loot was an engraved invitation to mayhem from kidnappers and other shadowy characters in this country.

I never took it as a breach of ethics to express my opposition to the opinions of a colleague. What I would have considered a breach of ethics was to have left what I considered a patent falsehood—and one that was producing tremendous harm—unanswered.

It is a real problem. But I don't see that Pimentel's bill solves it. From where I stand, it is a cure that's worse than the disease. I've always known Pimentel to be an ardent supporter of human rights, or civil rights, whichever come first. It is on that ground that I ask him to reconsider his proposal. It infringes on them.

At the very least, this is so because it infringes on editorial judgment. The bill compels the mass media to print or air the side of the aggrieved person on pain of penalties. That means that on any given day, a newspaper for example will not be free to determine what appears on all its pages, being compelled to devote part of them to printing replies from people who feel aggrieved, real or imagined. Can you imagine how many of them will demand to be heard?

A newspaper has only so many pages to work with, just as a TV network or radio station has only so much time to work with—unlike their online counterparts that enjoy almost infinite space. To compel a newspaper or TV network or radio station to use part of their space or time for something like this is to remove that space or time from their editorial control. It is to curtail their right to determine what is important enough on any given day to give space or time to. That has awesome implications for freedom of the press.

But far more than that, who's to say who is aggrieved or not? I have yet to meet a public official who has not felt he or she was unjustly maligned by criticism. The President is chief of them. Aquino was so, Ramos was so, Erap was so, and Ms Macapagal is so. All of them have bristled at criticism and tried to persuade or cow editors and publishers to see things their way. To no great success, though some editors and publishers have only been too eager to give in. President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo, who takes undue exception to criticism of any kind—she is not called *pikon* for nothing—will be the main beneficiary of this bill.

Pimentel's bill in fact is nothing new. A few years ago, Erap tried to justify his call for the movie producers and government offices to remove their ads from the Inquirer by saying the Inquirer had been unfair in its coverage of him. He even went to the extent of banning Inquirer reporters from press conferences disguised as socials on the ground that those reporters could not get things right. Other public officials hopped on the bandwagon, several mayors arguing they had the right as well to ban reporters who were notorious in getting their facts wrong from covering them. I said then, and say now, that the day public officials decree whether reports about them are true or not is the day we say goodbye to a free press.

It is a bad situation, I know, but the only recourse people who have been maligned, real or imagined, really have is to appeal to the media's sense of fair play. That appeal won't always go unheeded. I know that many editors make it a point to try to correct blatant mistakes, or iniquitous accusations. It's not perfect, but, like democracy, it's the best of a rotten deal.

The alternative is so much worse.

Pinning hope on Romulo, Yorac to get P23.5 B in FM taxes

POLITICAL TIDBITS

Belinda Olivares-Cunanan

THE DUAL citizenship for Filipinos with foreign citizenship may be closer to reality now that Senate President Franklin Drilon and Speaker Jose de Venecia are pushing for the passage of the law allowing it. The bill is included in the 16 priority measures jointly agreed by the two chiefs for approval before the sine die adjournment on June 6, and their instruction is to work double time on them. The report of the Senate justice committee chaired by Sen. Francis Pangilinan is making the rounds for the members' signatures.

Senate Chief Drilon, who authored Senate Bill 1354 on dual citizenship, argues that Commonwealth Act No. 63, which provides for the ways in which Philippine citizenship is lost under the 1935 Constitution, ought to be reexamined 65 years after its passage, in the light of "changing realities in what's rapidly becoming a borderless world." He points out that while many overseas Filipinos have lost their RP citizenship because they have obtained citizenship in another state, it should be recognized that majority of them migrated in search of better opportunities for themselves and their families. But it should also be stressed, he said, that these Filipinos continue to maintain their ties to the homeland and more importantly, contribute to its economy through their regular remittances. "There is no doubt that a vast majority of our erstwhile countrymen remain Filipinos in heart and mind," said Drilon.

* * *

Drilon stressed the report of Center for Immigration Studies in the United States that there are some 89 countries around the world that allow some form of dual/multiple citizenship. Of these, the US, United Kingdom, Canada, France, 14 out of 17 Latin American nations, a number of Asian nations as well as two "staunchly nationalistic states," Cuba and Israel, are known to allow, "either explicitly or implicitly," their former nationals to retain their citizenship even after being naturalized elsewhere.

I agree with Drilon: in fact we saw this up close during my husband's stint in Cambodia from 1995-1998, when its citizens began returning in droves from various points abroad, carrying foreign citizenships acquired in exile after they fled during the Khmer Rouge regime in the mid-'70s. And while it could be argued that under the circumstances, Cambodia has no choice but to welcome its citizens with foreign citizenship, considering the sharp depletion of precious human resources in that unlamented regime, still, it made a lot of sense to put priority on badly needed human resources over narrow xenophobia.

* * *

At this point, the Philippines is hardly in a better plight: our citizens from abroad have the wherewithal to sustain our ailing economy and help develop our country; the growing thinking is that we should welcome them as Filipino citizens even if they have foreign citizenship. Recently, a Filipino-American leader in the US named Yolanda Ortega-Stern, who heads the Federation of Filipino-American Chambers of Commerce in California, called on Drilon with a voluminous folder of signatures of Pinoys in the US, advocating dual citizenship and absentee voting. She pointed out that the Filipino-Americans have a combined disposable income of $27 billion after taxes, the highest among US ethnic groups, and that they account for over 50 percent of the $9 billion remitted to RP yearly by overseas Filipinos. Said Stern: "We have the numbers, the resources, the resolve, the power and the heart. We would like to offer all these to our mother country. Please welcome us." She stressed the US Pinoys' interest in investments here, and to be able to practice their professions here.

* * *

Former Senate President and first PCGG chair Jovito Salonga termed credible the INQUIRER's banner report that $400 million was transferred secretly to other banks before the Swiss Banking Commission could order a freeze on all Marcos accounts in Swiss banks on the night of March 24, 1986. In fact the correct amount, by Imelda Marcos' own admission, he notes, is $800 million that escaped from government's clutches from the time the Marcoses fled in Feb. 26, 1986 to the Swiss freeze a month later. He recalled Imelda's interesting admission before two big wire services on March 26, 1998, when she was running as a presidential candidate, that there is more Marcos money that the government is not yet aware of, but that "for the time being, I can admit that there is only $800 million in various international banks."

What surprises Salonga, however, is that neither the PCGG commissioners at the close of the Ramos administration nor the new PCGG officials in Estrada's presidency did anything to hold Imelda accountable for "that incriminating admission." In fact, he recalled that Estrada's PCGG chair, Felix de Guzman, even said that the PCGG "would not be adversarial at this time," preferring to forge a compromise settlement with the Marcoses in the hope that they would have a "reciprocal attitude" toward "abbreviating" the proceedings. Salonga said he couldn't understand at that time why the PCGG chair was acting "like a beggar" in the light of such incriminating evidence.

Salonga also raised the query as to why the government has failed to run after the Marcoses for the P23.5 billion in deficiency income and inheritance taxes on their estate, which has been due since 1993, despite the fact that the Supreme Court had assessed them "with finality" on March 1, 1999. That P23.5 billion, he says, should be far bigger now with the accumulated interest. Indeed, why hasn't this issue been pressed? Salonga's glad that Executive Secretary Alberto Romulo and PCGG Chair Haydee Yorac are now in charge, as "it's time our people got justice and good governance."

Gun survivor

YOUNGBLOOD

Honey Reyes

*We want to know what the young are thinking about. What are their thoughts on current issues? We welcome contributions from the twentysomething and below.—**Ed.***

I AM a gun survivor, a victim of a violent crime, a statistic among the numerous injustices done by criminals. In short, I got robbed, I resisted and I paid the price. I'll never forget that fateful night. A friend and I stopped by the bank near where I live to withdraw some money. While waiting for the money to come out, two guys just jumped out from the corner, one waved a gun and declared a holdup. Immediately, my attention was diverted to the money about to come out of the ATM. I never expected them to grab my Ericsson T28 cellular phone strapped to my waist. The funny thing is, I never display my phone, and it is usually kept hidden under my shirt. I guess the ends of my shirt were resting neatly over the phone displaying it. I was surprisingly calm about everything, I even managed to grab the guy by the shoulders with every intention of giving him a knee strike to the balls. What I didn't realize was that I was on the edge of a step, so I fell off. Silly me, I stood up and chased after the guy, that's when he suddenly turned around and fired the gun. I was so surprised, I thought the gun was fake since it was so small. I thought I didn't get hit since I did not feel anything. I still went after him. When I noticed that I couldn't walk straight anymore, I looked down and saw that my foot was covered with blood. All I could do was yell curses at the top my lungs and my friend drove me to the hospital.

People have called me stupid for fighting back. They say I should've given the phone, no phone is worth my life, etc., etc. and other crap I hate hearing. What would have really upset me is, if I had given up that phone without a fight. I know people will be shaking their heads upon hearing that but I just can't help it. I've always been a fighter and nothing will change that. You may call me a fool but I have always believed that bravery and foolhardiness are one. Why do you think people die fighting when they could've done the smart thing by heading for the hills to hide? A week after I was discharged from the hospital, I started my new job, kept busy, did my hobbies, etc. In short I did everything to forget about it instead of wallowing in self-pity. After all, I've done enough self-pity during my week-long stay at the hospital.

When the police came to get my statement. I wanted to scream at them. What's this for? As if they can catch those thieves. I just wasted saliva in retelling such events. What's the point? Is this to make me feel better that they are doing something? Ha! The police in Manila couldn't even catch a criminal even if their life depended on it. The growing crime rate proves otherwise.

Every now and then, when I close my eyes, I get transported back to the incident, a lot of things keep nagging my mind. What if I never fell off? What if I managed to beat up the guy to a bloody pulp? If only that bank had a security guard present at night. If only I didn't have to get some cash. So many ifs...

I've developed a fatalistic outlook toward life. Whenever someone says that I could've died I simply shrug and say, if it's time to go then it's time. I've also become paranoid and resentful about a lot of things. I've lost all confidence in people. I simply cannot bear to be mixed with the lowlifes of society. Before I used to teach catechism among the poor, now I can't even go near them and I feel utmost revulsion especially at the thought that the scumbag who shot me is among them. I'm afraid that I might go berserk if I even see someone who looks like that scalawag. I know it's bad that I've generalized poor folks into that category but can you blame me for feeling this way?

Sometimes, when this nightmare haunts me I slip into silent mode, especially when people asked about it. I get really annoyed particularly when people ask to see the gunshot scar. Am I supposed to be some specimen who can rouse one's pique for a few minutes? I try to put on a façade that I have put the whole incident behind me. My friends say thank heavens that I am strong. But the people who know me best say that they see the rage in my eyes wanting to get out. Other people would've been too traumatized and would surely live the life of a hermit, but not me, I straighten shoulders and make myself get on with my life. Yet, at times, I wish I were weak so I could lock myself up in a shell. Occasionally I do make jokes about the incident to make myself feel better.

Almost a year has passed since that dreadful incident. I am still rebuilding my life. Yet forever I will bear both the physical and emotional scar, a reminder that will haunt me ceaselessly.

Honey Reyes, 22, is a graduate of the Ateneo de Manila University.

From 'vaginal' to 'phenomenal'

AT LARGE

Rina Jimenez-David

WHILE doing interviews for the book "Nightmare Journeys," which features the true accounts of women who had been trafficked into sex work here and abroad (and not only survived but prevailed over their situation), I was struck by how casually many of them were lured into that line of work.

For most, a distant relative, a neighbor, or a friend of a friend dangled a way out of poverty or an untenable family situation. Three of them ran away from home and encountered strangers who deceived or cajoled them to work in brothels and in the *"akyat barko"* trade. Others were even pushed into the work by relatives, including one whose mother shopped her around various clubs and sing-along joints when she was just 14.

It was also fairly obvious from their accounts how easy it was for their promoters, talent managers and/or recruiters to circumvent all the laws, rules and regulations governing the deployment of young women abroad.

A 13-year-old was simply made-up and instructed to dress in a sexy outfit so she could pass the auditions. A 16-year-old showed up in Japan and was immediately compelled to board the next plane back home. Less than a month later, carrying a new passport with a different name, she walked through Narita airport escorted by her Japanese promoter and went straight into hostessing in a club. Before she met her Japanese boyfriend, she had already been pulled out of club work altogether and was working as a full-time call girl.

* * *

THE 14 stories told in "Nightmare Journeys" are multiplied a hundredfold, perhaps a thousandfold, in real life.

And as discussed in the columns on the "vaginal economy," or how the otherwise legitimate deployment of Filipino women as entertainers has deteriorated into their massive trafficking into sex work, the government has long been caught in a bind between regulating deployment to minimize if not eliminate the outflow of young women, while at the same time assisting women to find employment abroad and devising means to protect them and ensure their rights are respected. It has thus become a most delicate search for balance, between respecting the women's right to find work where they are able, and imposing enough controls to prevent abuse and exploitation.

The situation isn't helped any by the loud clamor and pressure from other interested parties, namely those who have been profiting—legitimately or not—from the deployment of women to clubs, bars and other such outlets abroad.

Willie Espiritu, the chair of an organization of talent promoters and managers, asserts that overseas performing artists, as the women (and men) are officially known, "are not vaginal commodities" but "human beings deserving of respect and dignity (who) need every protection from the State." But if he believes his own assertion, then why does Espiritu's organization oppose the imposition of new rules and regulations that are intended to strengthen the accreditation process and the protection mechanisms for the women here and abroad?

* * *

ESPIRITU says the deployment of OPAs should be deregulated right now, as the players in the industry "know how to police the sector that is their source of their bread and butter, particularly for the much-maligned OPAs."

But if deployment is their "bread and butter," would they jeopardize their profits by making sure only legitimate performers are deployed, and antagonize their foreign principals by making sure the young women are not abused or exploited?

Elizabeth Nieva, president of the Pangarap Foundation for OPAs, writes to express her appreciation for the columns on the "vaginal economy," noting that the columns could not have been more timely "especially now that the gates to such hell have been opened wider with the court order restraining government from imposing controls on the deployment particularly of female overseas performing artists. Constant exposure of the issue, we believe, will go a long way in deterring the illegals from further abusing our Filipina OPAs."

* * *

BUT illegal deployment and abuse at the hands of employers is but "one side of the coin," adds Nieva. "The other side...shows Filipina OPAs making good in their chosen career and giving the country a good name." Nieva asserts that telling "positive" stories of OPAs who have made good is important "to restore to Filipino OPAs the self-respect that many of them have lost on account on the bad news and the derogatory 'Japayuki' image that they always read or see about themselves in the media." Promoting a positive self-image among Filipino OPAs, says Nieva, is in fact just part of the mission that their foundation is pursuing. Another part is advancing advocacy on their behalf and "transform popular perceptions of the vaginal economy into the real picture of a phenomenal economy made so by the phenomenal Filipino overseas performing talents."

Nieva might want to know that in the course of our interview, Lucy Lazo, the beleaguered director-general of Tesda, shared that among her dreams for the OPAs who come to Tesda for testing and accrediting are genuine regional training centers where young women and men could receive serious training in all aspects of performance: singing, dancing and acting. With so much natural talent abounding, there is no reason why Filipinos could not "invade" Broadway, Hollywood, and other legitimate venues for entertainment and bring pride to our country. We need only take our performing artists seriously and work determinedly against any further growth of the "vaginal economy."

'Costumbres Chinas de la muerte'

SENSE AND SENSIBILITY

Bambi L.Harper

THE LAST instalment of Paz Yuchengco's observations of Chinese customs deals naturally with death. Preparations for the moment begin long before (when they begin to grow old) and people prepare the clothes they will wear for their wake. This is because the Chinese believe it is better to die clothed. The ceremonies commence on the death bed.

The first thing that is done is to cover all mirrors in the house with white cloth and the front door with a black cloth. The corpse is then placed in a casket and brought to the funeral home. The Chinese do not like having the wake in their homes.

When the corpse of a father is in the funeral home, the eldest son goes in search of a good burial spot if the family has none. A good location in a cemetery is important for the family due to the belief that if a good spot cannot be found bad luck will befall the entire family. The son has to take into account the form, dimension and location of the terrain.

Once the son has found the ideal spot, he and the important older members of the family decide the date and the hour of the burial. The majority prefer to bury their dead after many days because the preparations and ceremonies are very difficult and complicated and need much time.

The entire family dons black immediately including the men and the children. (Oddly enough this is only pertinent in the Philippines; in China the colour of mourning is white or grey.) An interesting aspect of this custom is that a stranger can immediately recognize the proximity of the relationship of those in mourning to the deceased. If dressed totally in black they are blood relatives. If they are in black but with a red sash they are either in laws or far relations. If a woman, it may be that she is a married daughter or a married niece or goddaughter. If a man, he may be a son-in-law, a nephew or a godson. Children wearing a red sash are children of daughters. Married daughters cannot wear black after the funeral because this may bring bad luck to her in-laws. If they wish to continue in mourning they can wear grey, green, white or blue.

During bereavement female members are not allowed to wear make-up while the younger members such as children and grandchildren cannot shave nor have a haircut. They all have to wait 40 or a hundred days. The women cannot go visiting or beautify themselves for a hundred days or amuse themselves out of the house. Not even visit their parents before 40 days are up.

On the actual funeral day there is much confusion and lamentation especially among the women. The widow and her mother-in-law wail in high voices and their laments are like poetry reciting the life and deeds of the dead man. This custom is still practiced by women who spent their childhood in China and who have learned these lamentations. When the hour comes for the funeral the laments cease and all the family members gather around the coffin to pose for a photographer.

The fortune and prominence of the dead man are demonstrated in the funeral cortege since this is his final opportunity to do so. The Chinese seldom send flowers instead they send silk banners with consoling messages or pasted greetings. These banners are placed en route and form part of the cortege. The number of relatives he had is also evident in the funeral.

The order followed in the cortege is almost always the same. The photograph of the dead man on an open car leads the way. Aside from his photo there is a paper car representing the one he had when alive. Behind the funeral car is an employee bearing a red flag. (If the dead man is not prominent or poor this is not done.) It carries characters in gold denoting his name, place of birth, age and the number of generations that precede him. Immediately behind the flag is a car occupied by a prominent and respected man who is or has been a government official. (In the Philippines usually this would be the Chinese ambassador or another high official of the embassy.) It is a great honor both for the official and the dead man. (The family of the deceased always has to send many expensive presents to this official after the funeral including a red envelope containing not less than a thousand pesos).

Cars with flags follow and if there are many these can delay the cortege. A band of musicians separate the first section from the second that is composed of the funeral car and the immediate family. The children have to walk to the cemetery. Neither the distance nor the weather is considered. The women may ride if they are tired but they have to at least walk half way. Those who walk are composed of the relatives, friends, good employees and godchildren. If the deceased is prominent in the community, schools and associations who have been his beneficiaries in the past send many delegations to join the cortege.

Once they reach the gates of the cemetery all the women with the exception of the widow and the children have to get down from the cars and walk with the rest to the site. The mother seldom attends the funeral especially if she is old.

(To be Continued)

WHATEVER HAPPENED TO . . . ?

Hatfield's physical injury cases

FILIPINO-AMERICAN basketball player Rudy Hatfield and American import Ira Clark of the Philippine Basketball Association were charged last year with cases of physical injuries by members of the prominent Araneta clan. They were accused of serious physical injuries for beating Juan Ignacio Araneta, while his wife was the victim cited in the slight physical injury case.

The Araneta couple filed the cases with the Makati City Metropolitan Trial Court on Oct. 19, 2000. The cases were assigned to Branch 64 presided by Judge Dina Teves. The cagers were accused of beating Araneta and molesting his wife on June 29, 2000 at the Wherelse? Bar at the Hotel Intercontinental in Makati City.

On Feb. 23, 2001, Hatfield was arrested at the RFM gym in Mandaluyong City, while he was practicing with his Pop Cola teammates. He posted bail on the same day. Clark had already left the country then.

Arraignment has been reset several times due to Hatfield's failure to appear in court.

Case status: The court scheduled the next arraignment on June 10, 2002. Hatfield is still with the PBA as a player of the Coca-Cola Tigers. He is also a member of the 15-man basketball team which will represent the country in the 14th Asian Games in Pusan, South Korea. Clark is now with the Oklahoma Thunders, a team competing in the United States Basketball League (USBL).

Armin P. Adina, PDI Research Department

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LETTERS

Outright exemption from PPA?

THE DEPARTMENT of Energy has found, ahead of the Energy Regulatory Commission, Meralco's petition for a rate hike unjustifiable. Considering the volume of pertinent documents to review, I would assume that it took some time for the department to arrive at its findings.

Curiously, it has remained silent on Leyte Rep. Ted Failon's position that Region VIII, which hosts a vast reserve of geothermal energy and, as a matter of fact, supplies extra electricity to the islands of Luzon, Cebu and Mindanao, should be exempted outright from the payment of the purchased power adjustment.

On this, the energy secretary does not need to conduct a review of reams and reams of papers. All he needs is to use common sense and logic.

Why should the people of Region VIII be made to pay a "shortage" expense for something of which our place has more than enough? Why "penalize" us for sharing a natural resource with the rest of the country?

Does the DOE attend only to the electricity concerns of Metro Manila that it has to focus its attention on its differences with Meralco? On the PPA issue, are the provinces again to be given cavalier attention by the national government?

When will the good secretary begin to attend to our concerns in the provinces?

—DOMINADOR B. MONDRAGON JR., senior consultant, Management and Allied Services Specialist, Rm. 203 Prince Jun Condominium, Timog Ave., Quezon City

Not the time for constitutional changes

I AM against amending the Constitution now. The ripe time to do this will be a few months after the 2004 election. There is so much to do between now and 2004 and the efforts of the government and the electorate should be focused on solving the current problems. Constitutional changes now will only be divisive. This will hamper our combined efforts to stabilize the country. The economy is still at ground zero, peace and order is still a dream, poverty and unemployment are staring us in the face, graft and corruption are unraveling our society and government—there are still a thousand and one problems that beset us. Constitutional changes will only bring us deeper into the quagmire.

Even conducting a referendum to determine the people's will on constitutional changes is ill-advised. Some members of the House of Representatives and the Senate even want to float several suggestions on constitutional provisions that need to be amended. This is an undisguised attempt to influence and preempt the work of a future constitutional convention. I wish to remind the members of both houses of Congress that they were elected to undertake the serious task of legislation and not to tinker with the Constitution. They should devote their time and energies in tackling the legislative measures endorsed to them by the present administration.-

-APOLONIO G. RAMOS, 42 Mindanao St., Marikina City

Unholy silence

PINOY KASI

Michael L. Tan

THE APRIL 1 issue of Time magazine carries an interview with "Father X," convicted and imprisoned for child molestation and now on parole. "Father X" recalls how he walked down the rectory hallway shortly after arriving at his first parish:

"I peered into a mirror. I had my collar on. As I looked, I said to myself, 'You're the same as you were a month ago, except now you are a priest.' And that was really a big moment, a profound moment. It was trouble."

That chilling passage reminds of the stark relationship between sex and power, one that is all too overwhelming within the Catholic Church. Being "Father," the priest, brings one close to absolute power. Perceived as a "man of God," the priest is almost untouchable.

Even worse, many of these men of the cloth know they have an advantage being part of an institution that has little tolerance for dissent and criticism, and that will shield its erring clerics from the law.

We see this temptation to impunity in the way the Catholic Church has handled, or mishandled the cases of clerical sexual abuse. Reports of sexual abuse have been ignored, investigations dragged on for years, offenders quietly transferred from one parish or school to another. To cite just one example, church officials in Bridgeport, Connecticut knew one of their priests, Laurence Brett, was molesting children as early as 1964; yet he was protected and reassigned to different ecclesiastical posts, to be prosecuted only in 1992.

Many more cases have festered through the years, finally leading to an explosion of lawsuits. Years of cover-up may cost the Catholic Church in America up to $1 billion in damage claims. In Louisiana, the Catholic Church had to pay $18 million to settle 70 cases filed against one priest, Gilbert Gauthe.

It is in this light that I worry about the local Catholic Church's response. Msgr. Hernando Coronel, spokesperson for the Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines, said last week that church officials were sorry for what had happened and would now discourage "the gay subculture" within the Catholic Church. The statement echoes earlier comments of the Vatican spokesperson, Joaquin Navarro-Valls. I will write about this Catholic "gay subculture" in the future but right now I will say that blaming scapegoats will not solve the problem.

The day after Bishop Coronel spoke, we heard from Msgr. Socrates Villegas of the Archdiocese of Manila, this time claiming that "only 1.6 percent" of our 4,000 priests have strayed. This play on numbers is similar to that of American church officials who argue that "less than one percent" of their priests have erred. Using these numbers trivializes the issue, as if "a few cases" are not worth attention. Our good bishops forget that clerical sexual abuse sometimes involves serial offenders, encouraged precisely by the Catholic Church's silence. Defrocked priest John Geoghan, for example, faces charges from 86 alleged victims. The total number of victims is said to run to more than 200, with others choosing not to go to court.

I sometimes wonder if the Sicilian mafia borrowed its code of omerta from the Catholic Church. In the name of omerta, honor, members of an organization are ordered to keep silent, or even to cover up for other members' misdemeanors.

Without succumbing to sensationalism and witch-hunting, we can and must find out what has happened and what is going on. I suspect that in the Philippines, sexual misconduct does not just involve child sex abuse but also sexual opportunism with adult victims. In my last column I wrote that sex therapist Dr. Margarita Gosingco Holmes had heard from only one woman who had been abused by a priest. She has since clarified that she is just as concerned with cases that may not necessarily involve "sexual abuse" in the strict sense of the word—she recalls at least six letters from women who were seduced by priests from whom they had sought counseling.

Even more than in the United States, Filipinos are vulnerable to clerical abuse because our society is tainted by authoritarian values, including those of the Roman Catholic Church. I have seen too many Filipino priests and teachers intoxicated by their power, manipulating and using their wards in sexual and non-sexual ways. The victims end up with ambiguous feelings toward their oppressors, fear mingling with love and loyalty. We speak here not of silent, but of silenced victims.

In the long run, this unholy silence erodes the church's credibility. I hear many people including older and very devout Catholics commenting that bishops and priests spend too much time railing against family planning and the use of condoms for HIV/AIDS prevention rather than promoting sexual responsibility among lay people and their own clerics.

I am encouraged that the Association of Major Religious Superiors is willing to listen to document cases of clerical sexual misconduct and provide counseling if needed. If you have been victimized, as a child or an adult, do contact Sister Nila, a Maryknoll sister who heads the AMRSP gender desk. Her landline is 724-7173 and her cellphone is 0916-380-3574.

A final note: you can report cases without having to name names. I say this because I know two survivors of clerical sexual abuse who are unwilling to come out because they do not want the priests suffering from sanctions or imprisonment. If victims can be so forgiving amid so much betrayal and pain, what now can we expect from the Holy Mother Church?

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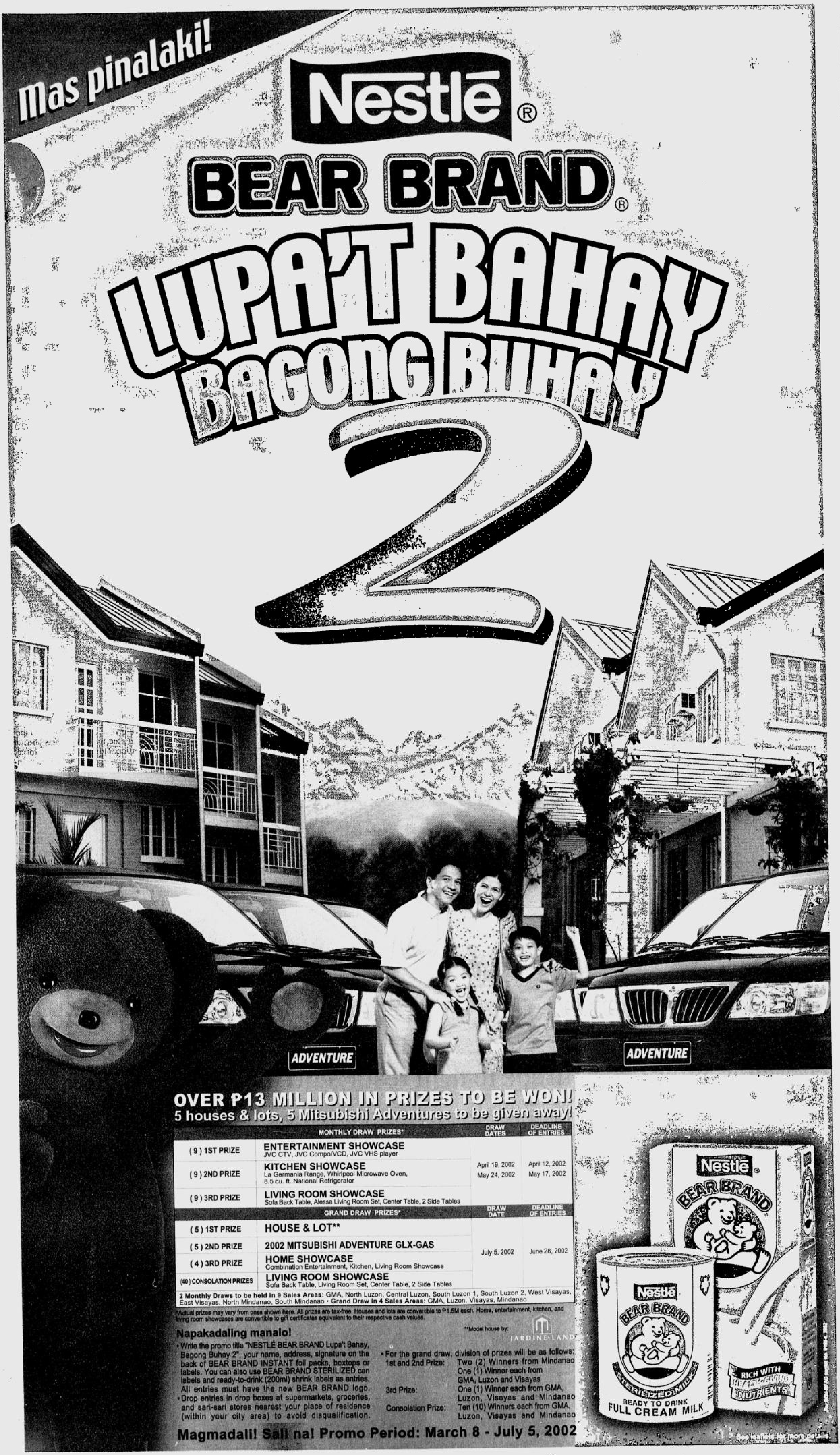

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The WORLD

Editor **Luverne B. Gueco**

Carter meets Castro in landmark visit

HAVANA—Former US President Jimmy Carter, on a historic visit to Cuba to try to patch up four decades of feuding with the United States, met on Sunday with the top echelons of the island's communist government.

Carter was warmly welcomed in Havana by President Fidel Castro and applauded by American tourists for his efforts to bridge the political gap between two nations only 140 km apart.

President Fidel Castro, 75, dressed in a dark business suit instead of his usual military fatigues, met Carter at Havana's airport and praised him for attempting a rapprochement with Cuba during his 1977-1981 presidency despite the Cold War.

Castro later hosted a dinner for Carter at the government headquarters in Havana's Revolution Square, attended by his top ministers and the president of the National Assembly, Ricardo Alarcon.

"It is no secret that for almost a century there have not been optimal relations between the two states, and they still are not," Castro said in welcoming remarks at the airport broadcast live by Cuban television.

"However . . . in the four years of your tenure as president, you had the courage to make efforts to change the course of those relations," he said, standing before US and Cuban flags fluttering together in the breeze.

Castro said Carter was free to meet with whoever he wanted, including opponents, and visit biotech research facilities that the US government last week charged were developing biological weapons.

Carter, 77, a critic of the 40-year US trade embargo imposed on Cuba, is the most prominent American and the first former president to visit Cuba since Castro took power in a 1959 revolution.

"We come here as friends of the Cuban people and we hope to meet many Cubans of all walks of life," he said in Spanish.

"We realized that on some of these issues we have differences, but welcome the opportunity to find points in common," said Carter, accompanied by his wife, Rosalynn.

Cuba policy experts in Washington, however, do not expect Carter's trip to bring about any change in relations between the countries while trade sanctions, codified into law in 1996, remain in place.

Carter plans to meet on Thursday with leaders of a small but growing dissident movement who want the right to express themselves and peaceful reforms to Cuba's one-party state.

Castro accompanied Carter in a Soviet-era black limousine to his hotel in the colonial heart of Old Havana where a group of tourists, mostly Americans, welcomed the former president with cheers and applause.

"President Carter: tear down this wall!" shouted Elaine George, a tourist from California, as Carter got out of the car.

It was an apparent reference to US President Ronald Reagan's 1987 speech in Germany in which he demanded that Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev tear down the Berlin Wall. ***Reuters***

FORMER US President Jimmy Carter (left) listens to Cuban President Fidel Castro during a welcoming ceremony at "Jose Marti" International airport in Havana, May 12. Carter is on a six-day visit to Cuba, and is the first former American president to visit the communist island since Fidel Castro took power in 1959.

REUTERS

Roof at Russia's space complex collapses; 8 dead

MOSCOW—A roof at Russia's Baikonur space complex, the linchpin of the Soviet space program, collapsed on Sunday, trapping eight workers who were feared to have died under the rubble, space officials said.

Officials said it was unlikely the team, which was working on the roof, had survived the 80-meter plunge at the complex, now located in ex-Soviet Kazakhstan. High winds made the wrecked building unstable and complicated rescue efforts.

Officials at Rosaviakosmos, Russia's space agency, told Russian media that three columns supporting a roof had given way on Sunday morning at building No. 112, a vast hangar used for Russia's "Buran" (Snowstorm) shuttle spacecraft. They said one of the shuttle's models was inside the building.

A rescue team including seismologists, explosive experts and sniffer dogs left Moscow on Sunday evening for the complex, but officials said they faced a difficult task.

The official RIA news agency said Baikonur's director, Leonid Baranov, had surveyed the damage by flying over the area. It quoted informed sources as saying shoddy construction in the 1970s and 1980s was to blame for the accident.

The sources also said the damage would have no effect on future spaceshots, including missions to the International Space Station (ISS), as similar buildings were available at Baikonur.

The space center has felt the effects of much reduced state funding, with many facilities in a dilapidated state.

Baikonur has been used since the communist-era for most space launches, including cosmonaut Yuri Gagarin's first flight into orbit in 1961, and was seen as one of the shining achievements of Soviet science. In the post-Soviet era, Russia leases the complex from the Kazakh government.

The Buran shuttle made only a single orbital flight in 1988 and the programme was brought to a close five years later owing to lack of funds.

The Russian space program now encourages tourists to pay fees reported to be up to $20 million to fly to the ISS to make up for shortfalls in funding. South African computer millionaire Mark Shuttleworth was the second adventurer to embark on a fare-paying mission last month. ***Reuters***

REUTERS

TRAPEZE ACT IN KL

Cathy Baldini from France performs on the trapeze for shoppers at the Suria Kuala Lumpur City Center (KLCC) May 13. The trapeze act was performed in conjunction with the KLCC 4th anniversary celebrations.

US should explain why it supported V'zuela coup—Chavez

WASHINGTON—The US government should explain why it failed to condemn the brief coup in Venezuela last month that ousted a democratically elected government, Venezuelan Hugo Chavez said in an interview broadcast late Sunday.

"Some people believe I am a threat to the United States, to democracy. I've told them time and time again that this is not true," Chavez told CBS television.

"I believe that they really owe an explanation . . . to the people of the United States and also to us."

Chavez, speaking in Spanish through a translator, said he does not believe Washington was involved in the coup, but his government was investigating reports of US complicity.

"It really needs to be extremely strong evidence" before he would believe Washington was involved, Chavez said.

He said Saturday he had proof US military officers contacted the coup plotters, but said it was unclear whether they aided or opposed the coup.

Chavez rejected the coup leaders' claim he had resigned, which US officials quickly accepted.

"No, absolutely not. Never. Never. Never," he told CBS.

The state department refused comment on Chavez's remarks.

Washington has consistently denied any involvement in the coup April 12, in which Chavez was ousted following a three-day general strike that included street marches and protesters killed by unknown rooftop sharpshooters.

Business leader Pedro Carmona took over as interim president with military backing.

But after further unrest, and a switch in allegiance in the military—apparently angered at the interim government's dissolving of the country's Congress and Supreme Court—Chavez was back in power a mere 48 hours later.

Two government commissions are investigating events surrounding the coup.

Chavez has repeatedly irked Washington since being first elected as Venezuela's president in 1998 after a campaign in which he cultivated an anti-American image while at the same time keeping the United States as his nation's main client.

Relations further deteriorated when Chavez visited Washington's arch enemies, Libya's Moammar Khadafi and Iraqi President Saddam Hussein.

He told CBS he "honestly didn't know" the visits would anger the United States but would do it again if it was in Venezuela's best interest.

In October, he incurred US President George W. Bush's wrath when he accused the United States of killing children and innocent people in its war on terrorism in Afghanistan, in the wake of the Sept. 11 attacks on US soil.

Chavez also has forged a friendship with Cuban leader Fidel Castro, Washington's arch-enemy in the Americas.

And normally delicate relations with Colombia took a turn for the worse on reports that Chavez had secret dealings with Bogota's most dangerous guerrilla group, the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia.

Chavez told CBS he likes the United States.

"I enjoy Whitman's poems, and 'New York, New York,' the song. I love baseball, Yankee Stadium, Shea Stadium, hot dogs . . . freedom," he said. ***AFP***

Schroeder, Blair urge Europe to fight resurgence of extreme rightists

BERLIN—German Chancellor Gerhard Schroeder and British Prime Minister Tony Blair called on Europe on Sunday to stand up to a resurgence in extremism across the continent.

The British leader made a brief visit to Berlin to speak with Schroeder about the situation in the Middle East and Afghanistan, as well as about the far-right in Europe.

"We agreed entirely on the need for democratic people of all persuasions to stand together in solidarity against extremist policies of whatever kind," Blair told a joint news conference with Schroeder in the chancellery building.

"Those policies offer no real security, no real hope, no real answers to the problems people face and we reject them entirely," Blair said.

The shock success of extreme rightist Jean-Marie Le Pen in the first round of France's presidential election and the killing last week of Dutch anti-immigration crusader Pim Fortuyn, who was riding high in opinion polls ahead of a May 15 general election, have highlighted the rise of xenophobic movements across Europe.

Schroeder and Blair, who have moved their respective left-leaning parties toward the political center, meet regularly for informal talks on international issues. Their last meeting was in London last month.

Schroeder, whose government has attempted to outlaw Germany's far-right National Democratic Party (NPD), described the trend as the resurgence of nationalism in European politics, which aims to turn back decades of effort to unify Europe.

"The trend toward a resurgence in nationalism is problematic for European enlargement and integration and we must and will work to counter to it," he said.

Schroeder told Britain's Guardian newspaper at the weekend that European expansion to the east was an antidote to rising nationalism. He also said extremist parties were unlikely to have any success in Germany's September general election.

Schroeder's attempts to outlaw the NPD, launched last year, hit a stumbling block last week when Germany's constitutional court said it would wait until after the election to hear proceedings on the bid. ***Reuters***

Taipei imposes water rationing

TAIPEI—Taipei city on Monday imposed water rationing for the first time in 22 years as people prayed for monsoon rains to relieve an escalating drought, officials said.

From 4 a.m. water supplies to a wide part of the capital's downtown area were cut, with 420,000 households affected on the first day.

People scrambled to buy bottled water from hypermarkets as huge water tanks and plastic buckets were also snapped up for water storage.

The severe water shortage also sparked concerns about a fresh outbreak of a baby-killer virus known as hand-foot-and-mouth disease, which is spread by poor hygiene.

But the city authorities urged the public not to overly stock water fearing it could hamper the tough measures needed to combat the island's worst drought in years.

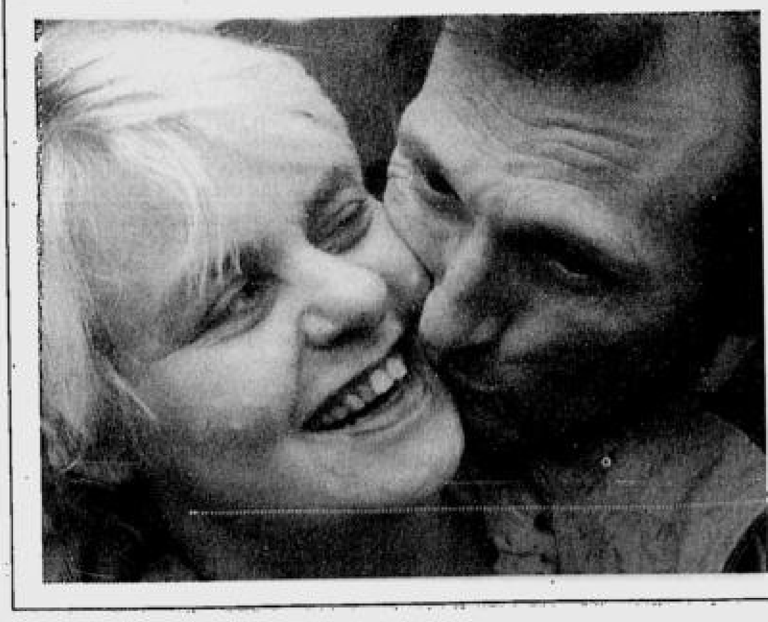
Restaurants meanwhile were forced to use disposable tableware, some made out of polylystrene which is to be banned for use in government agencies, schools and military units on July 1 for being non-environmentally friendly.

Taipei deputy mayor Ou Chinder announced last week that each of greater Taipei's five districts will have its water supplies suspended for 24 hours in rotation.

The rare measure was introduced after Feitsui Reservoir—the capital's major water source—hit its lowest level since beginning operations in 1987.

Supplies to carwashers, saunas and swimming pools have been suspended, amid plans to reduce water consumption by 330,000 tons daily.

"We had to levy the contingency measures ahead of schedule so that the Feitsui Reservoir could hang on until the drought is relieved," Ma said. ***AFP***



REUTERS **MERCIFUL END**

Briton Diane Pretty (left), seen in this file photo taken August 31, died with her husband Michael at her side on May 11, at a Bedfordshire Hospice, a statement issued by the Voluntary Euthanasia Society disclosed May 12. Pretty, who was terminally ill with the degenerative condition motor neuron disease, had recently lost the final round of her legal fight in a landmark decision at the European Court of Human Rights for her husband to assist her death.

Taiwan fit to be independent, says President Chen

WASHINGTON—Taiwan is "fit to be an independent country," Taiwanese President Chen Shui-bian said in remarks made public Sunday, adding that he wants to make a formal visit to the United States.

The comments came in a wide-ranging interview with Newsweek magazine, in which he addressed relations with mainland China and the United States, as well as Taiwan's status in the world.

"Taiwan is fit to be an independent country, that's the truth," Chen said. "And no matter if you agree or not, whether you accept it or not, Taiwan is an independent country."

He pointed out that US President George W. Bush had recently referred to the island as the Republic of Taiwan and that, in his view, the issue of formal recognition had now become secondary.

"As to how Taiwan is acknowledged, that's not important anymore," he said.

Chen also expressed a desire to come to the United States as a visitor and to be able to communicate with Americans.

So far, Taiwanese leaders have been issued mostly transit US visas to enable them to travel to Latin America where a number of countries still maintain diplomatic relations with Taiwan.

"I hope that I can enter the United States, and not just in transit," said the Taiwanese president. "I want to be able to be interviewed by the media and to make a public speech."

Last year, Bush said the United States would do "whatever it took" to defend Taiwan, a statement seen by many as a departure from the long-term US policy of strategic ambiguity toward the island.

Washington has also announced the most comprehensive arms package to Taiwan in almost a decade, which included four Kidd-class destroyers, eight diesel submarines and 12 P-3C submarine-hunting aircraft.

China considers the island a renegade province to be eventually reunified with the mainland.

Chen said the current military balance between Taiwan and mainland China must be maintained in order to preserve US strategic interests in the Asia-Pacific region and safeguard the island's democracy.

"The support of the US government and the American people will make the people of Taiwan more confident in exchanges with mainland China when we enter into dialogue and negotiations," he said. *AFP*

Israel's ruling Likud votes no to independent Palestinian state

SHARON

JERUSALEM—Israel's ruling Likud Party dealt a further blow to prospects for Middle East peace talks by voting against any future establishment of an independent Palestinian state.

The Likud vote came at a heated party convention in Tel Aviv late on Sunday and marked a victory for former Israeli leader Benjamin Netanyahu over Prime Minister Ariel Sharon in a looming battle for the party leadership.

In fresh West Bank violence, Israeli security services said they killed two Palestinian gunmen in two incidents in the early hours of Monday, the day when Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat was due to tour his battered West Bank cities by helicopter.

Palestinian official Saeb Erekat said the Likud vote imperiled hopes of a peace deal, and showed the true intentions of Israel and would increase frustrations of Palestinians locked in a violent 19-month-old struggle against Israeli rule.

"How many Palestinians will wake up tomorrow to say 'we have nothing to lose?'" he told CNN. "I hope it will be an eye-opener to President Bush."

Reacting to the Likud Party vote, the United States said it would continue to support the idea of a Palestinian state.

Asked about the vote, US National Security Council spokesperson Sean McCormack referred to President George W. Bush's vision of Israel and a Palestinian state living in peace.

"That is his vision for the region and we will continue working toward that vision," McCormack said without elaborating.

In an April speech, Bush said: "The outlines of a just settlement are clear: two states, Israel and Palestine, living side by side, in peace and security."

Sharon had told the assembled party members Palestinians must end violence and reform their political structures before he would allow any talk of them establishing a state.

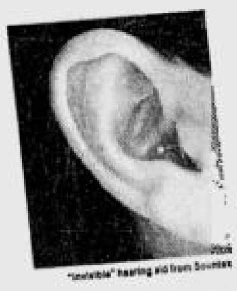
The party preferred the harder message delivered by Netanyahu, who vowed: "A state with all the rights of a state, this cannot be, not under (Palestinian leader Yasser) Arafat, nor under another leadership, not today, nor tomorrow."

Sharon described the vote as "a dangerous one for the state of Israel, that will complicate its diplomatic efforts." Both sides are considering a US proposal for a conference in the summer to try to restart the peace process.

"The end game is now clear," Palestinian official Erekat said. "This war is not against terror but to continue ruling 3.3 million Palestinians . . . I hope it will be an eye opener to the world to show them who we are dealing with."

Violence has racked the area since the Palestinians started a revolt against Israeli rule in September 2000. At least 1,349 Palestinians and 474 Israelis have been killed since then.

Monday morning saw the first deadly violence around Bethlehem since Israeli troops withdrew from the West Bank city at the end of their standoff with Palestinian militants at the Church of the Nativity last week. *Reuters*



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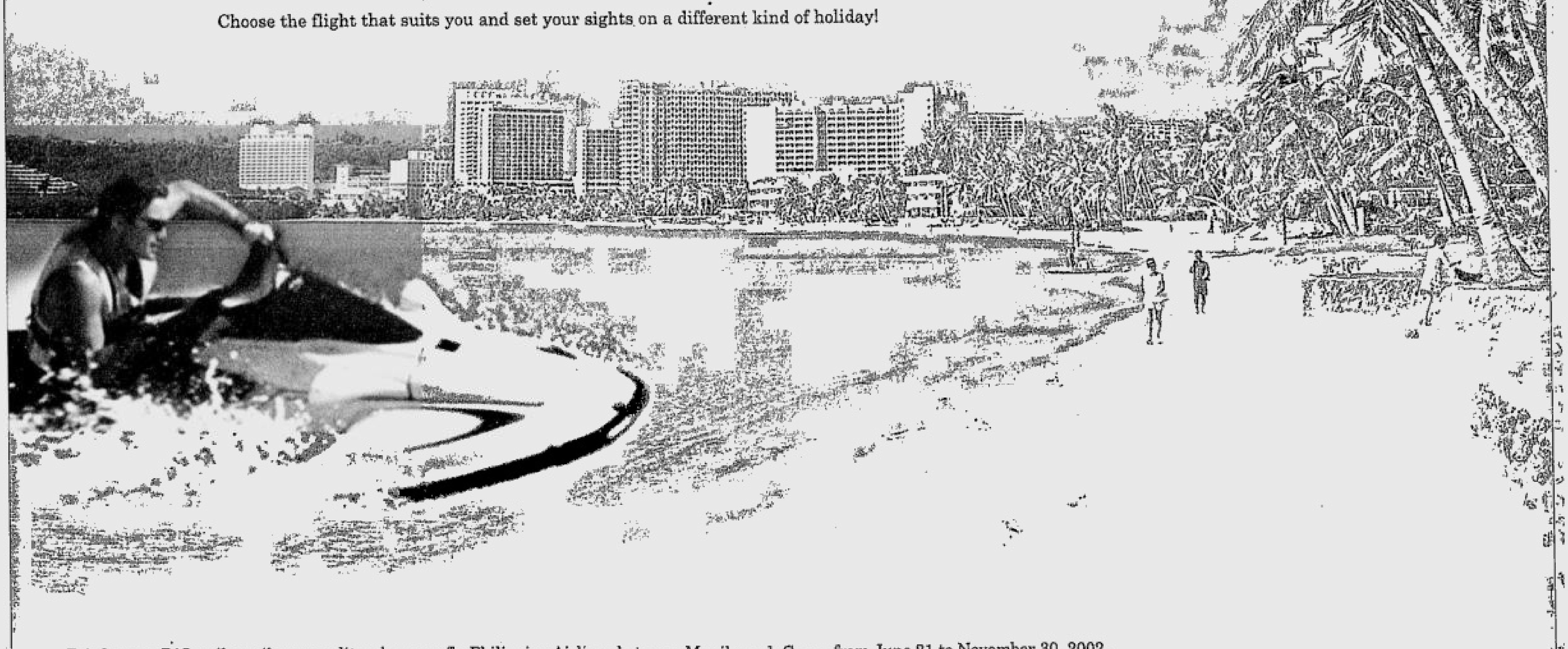

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Across the NATION

Assistant Editor **Tony Bergonia**

WEATHER FORECAST

FORECAST: Bicol region, Visayas and Mindanao will experience partly cloudy to cloudy skies with scattered rainshowers and thunderstorms. The rest of Luzon will have partly cloudy to at times cloudy skies.

SOURCE: PAGASA

Metro Manila	Partly Cloudy	HI36° Lo 25°
Baguio	Partly Cloudy	Hi 26° Lo 17°
Tuguegarao	Partly Cloudy	Hi 38° Lo 25°
Laoag	Partly Cloudy	Hi 36° Lo 25°
Clark Zone	Partly Cloudy	Hi 36° Lo 25°
Tagaytay	Partly Cloudy	Hi 32° Lo 22°
Legazpi	Partly Cloudy with Rains	Hi 32° Lo 25°
Calapan	Partly Cloudy	Hi 33° Lo 24°
Iloilo/Bacolod	Partly Cloudy with Rains	Hi 33° Lo 25°
Roxas	Partly Cloudy with Rains	Hi 32° Lo 26°
Cebu	Partly Cloudy with Rains	Hi 33° Lo 26°
Tacloban	Partly Cloudy with Rains	Hi 32° Lo 25°
Gen. Santos	Partly Cloudy with Rains	Hi 31° Lo 24°
Zamboanga	Partly Cloudy with Rains	Hi 31° Lo 25°
Cagayan de Oro	Partly Cloudy with Rains	Hi 33° Lo 23°
Davao	Partly Cloudy with Rains	Hi 34° Lo 25°

Compiled by: Ray Leyesa, PDI Research/05/14/02

ROUNDUP

3 hurt in holdup

BANGA, Aklan—Three jeep passengers were injured in a daylight hold-up in Barangay Switch, Tapaz, Capiz on May 8. The jeep was traversing the provincial road when it was stopped and robbed by four unidentified masked men. The suspects open fired at the jeep, wounding Angelita Gamayao, 75; Myrna Beyson, 44; and Christian Cabalin, 4, all of Tapaz. Policemen and soldiers from the 12th Infantry Battalion dispatched by Lt. Col. Romeo Gan failed to find the suspects but recovered two firearms, belongings believed to have been taken from the victims, and P9,150 in cash.

PDI Visayas Bureau

Ex-rebel nabbed

ROXAS CITY—A former rebel was arrested in Barangay Bunga, Mambusao, Capiz on May 5 and charged with illegal possession of firearms. Joselito Lava, 34, was arrested by the local police and elements from the Provincial Anti-Illegal Drugs Task Force after a raiding team found in his house a .38 cal. revolver, a magnum 357, and live bullets for a .38 cal. revolvers, .38 cal. pistols, an armalite rifle, and a carbine. Police said Lava, an employee of a government-run college in Mambusao, was suspected to have rejoined the New People's Army.

Gerry Pagharion, PDI Visayas Bureau

Blood donations

KALIBO, Aklan—The Philippine National Red Cross in Aklan received 26,550 cc of blood donations for its bloodletting activity here early this week. The donors were workers from the different agencies of the provincial government, private sector and 86 soldiers belonging to the 12th Infantry Battalion based in Banga town. Lt. Col. Romeo Gan, 12th IB Commander, lauded the Red Cross for its continuing effort to ensure the availability of blood for people who might need it someday. He also commended his personnel for their support for and participation in the endeavor. *PDI Visayas Bureau*

Lumber seized

BACOLOD CITY—Policemen from the 2nd Provincial Mobile Group tapped as enforcement unit of the newly activated Task Force Ilahas of the Negros Occidental provincial government seized on Wednesday 16,000 board feet of lumber worth P480,000, cut from a reforestation project in Sitio Baslay, Barangay Talacdan, Cauayan. Senior Insp. William Señoron said the seized lumber from narra, mahogany, teak, acacia, gubi and africal tulip species had been cut by six timber poachers, all residents of the barangay. The massive cutting of trees was discovered when the 2nd PMG troopers, accompanied by forest rangers of the Kabankalan Community Environment and Natural Resources Office, were patrolling the remaining forested area of southern Negros.

Carla Gomez, PDI Visayas Bureau

Holdup suspect killed

CALAMBA CITY—Elements of the Police Regional Office 4 and the Philippine National Construction Corp. patrol shot dead one of the three holdup men who robbed passengers of an FX taxi along the South Luzon toll way last week. The casualty, Richard Sabijon, a resident of Riverside I, Tambo, Parañaque City, died while being treated at the Perpetual Help Hospital in Biñan, Laguna. Recovered from the suspect was a .38 cal. revolver with four bullets and two spent shells. Passenger victims Jenny Valerio-Almanza and Orlando Ramos, both from Sta. Rosa, told police that they recognized Sabijon as the same man who robbed them of their cell phones, wristwatches and wallets in previous heists in the same place.

Romulo Ponte, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau

Slay suspect arrested

LEGAZPI CITY—The Ligao City Police Office has in its custody the suspect in the April 25 slaying of an 11-year-old girl in Barangay Sta. Cruz, Ligao City. A witness identified the arrested suspect, Jose Celis of Barangay Tula-Tula, Ligao City as the one who hacked and killed *chicharon* vendor Jill Bondad of Zone 3, Barangay Lanigay, Polangui, Albay. Bondad's body was found in a creek in the middle of a ricefield in her barangay with hack wounds in her head, hands, and knees. *Tony Macasinag, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau*

SC upholds Lanao mayor

BAGUIO CITY—The Supreme Court upheld the poll victory of Mayor Mauyag Papandayan Jr. of Tubaran, Lanao del Sur, when it junked the disqualification order issued by the Commission on Elections against him for his alleged violation of residency requirements. The court ruled that the Comelec's second division failed to prove its claim that Papandayan is a resident of Bayang, Lanao del Sur, and not Tubaran town, where he ran for mayor. The Comelec order nullifying Papandayan's election stemmed from a joint affidavit executed by three Tubaran residents who claimed that Papandayan has not, at any time, lived in their town. *Jovelyn Reyes, PDI Northern Luzon Bureau*

Ex-Sayyaf hostages now nurses for Army

ZAMBOANGA CITY—Former Abu Sayyaf hostages Reina Malonzo and Sheila Tabunag are now employed as military nurses at the Southern Command's Camp Navarro Hospital here.

Outgoing Southern Command chief Lt. Gen. Roy Cimatu said the nurses from Lamitan, Basilan who were separately recovered from their abductors late in November last year, "are now with us, with the military organization, serving our soldiers."

"They went to me and asked if I can help them and let them practice their profession at the Southcom hospital serving our soldiers to solve their (former hostages') psychological trauma, including problems on finance," Cimatu said.

Cimatu said accommodating former kidnap victims in the Armed Forces of the Philippines was one way of "curing" the trauma of that has somehow "prevented the survivors (from moving) forward and concentrat(ing) on doing productive things."

Malonzo and Tabunag joined the military hospital two months ago.

Former kidnap victim Joel Guillo, who was an accountant at the Don Jose Torres Memorial Hospital when he was abducted last year, is now with Brig. Gen. Hermogenes Esperon Jr., the chief of the Presidential Security Group. ***Julie Alipala, PDI Mindanao Bureau***

CHITO VECINA

FROLIC
The shadows play on water that shimmers with the fading light of the sun in Guiuian, Eastern Samar, rushing toward a fishing boat that has come to shore to stay until the next sunrise.

Farm water gets scarcer as dry spell intensifies

By Abner Bolos
PDI Central Luzon Desk

TARLAC CITY—Diego Napurga, a farmer in Pura, Tarlac, has sunk 11 20-foot pipes into the ground for his deep well pump in preparation for this year's drought. But it looks like all his efforts may have gone to waste.

Since February, the pump has stopped producing water and his farm remains arid, barren and unproductive. In fact, the water shortage in this part of the province is so bad that residents from several villages buy water from the local water district for P1 a pail.

It's a situation unheard of several years back, says Napurga.

In one village in Capas town, at least 300 sacks of *gabi* (a rootcrop) seedlings already planted have dried up.

The seedlings cost from P1,500 to P2,500 per sack and were planted in at least 20 hectares of land in the upland village of Sta. Juliana.

Dominador Ramos, an Aeta and board member of the Tribal Communities Development Council here, said farmers knew that El Niño-induced drought is coming this year.

This was the reason they chose to plant a crop that was least dependent on water, he said.

But Ramos said they were still shocked at the results. *Gabi* is usually planted near natural water sources such as rivers and streams, but the crops have all dried up, he said.

These scenes are being replicated in farms all over Tarlac as the drought continues to wreak havoc on agriculture and fishery resources.

Rogelio Panzo, program coordinator of the Department of Agriculture provincial office, said they would recommend to the Tarlac provincial board the declaration of a state of calamity in the province because of the serious effects of the drought on agriculture and fishery.

Panzo said Tarlac stands to lose billions of pesos in agricultural and fishery produce if mitigation projects are not implemented soon.

"Majority of rice and corn farmers in the province have been affected and practically all communal fishery resources have dried up," he said.

"The rain on Sunday night does not mean that the drought has ended. If it does not rain for the next couple of weeks, the effects of the drought will be as bad as when it started," Panzo said.

A crop damage report issued in March covering the towns of La Paz, Moncada, San Clemente, Camiling and Victoria and Tarlac City showed that 2,028 of 5,892 hectares of rice and corn land have dried up as a result of the drought.

From these towns alone, 2,445 metric tons of rice and corn worth about P6 million are in danger of being lost, according to the DA report.

As early as March, the Tarlac City council had placed at least 10 barangays severely hit by drought under a state of calamity.

Panzo said his office has asked for P36 million in funds from the regional DA office to fund the installation of 500 deep well pumps, livelihood projects for farmers who have lost their crops, and seedlings for alternative crops.

Army tells Arlyn: Identify your captors

ZAMBOANGA CITY—The military insisted that broadcast journalist Arlyn de la Cruz should identify the people who, she claimed, abducted her in Sulu in January.

Maj. Gen. Glicerio Sua, Task Force Comet chief and 1st Tabak Infantry Division commander, said the military needed De la Cruz's "full cooperation."

"We are aware that she knows her captors and we want her to substantiate her allegation," Sua said.

De la Cruz claimed that some of her abductors were former Moro National Liberation Front members who have been integrated into the military. ***Julie Alipala, PDI Mindanao Bureau***

HIGH TENSION WIRES

Villagers' protest suspends Napocor project

MAGALANG, Pampanga—The installation by the National Power Corp. of high-tension power lines at the Sta. Lucia Resettlement Center (SLRC) here was suspended last week following complaints from residents.

The residents, who complained that they were not consulted about the project, earlier threatened to stop construction work in the area where some 5,000 lahar-displaced families live. The residents said the project would be hazardous to their health and safety.

Among those opposing the project are Nick Marucut, SLRC Homeowners' Association vice president; Fr. Pete Sitchon, Sta. Lucia parish priest; and Frank Mangulabnan, chair of the Pinatubo victims' group Ugnayan ng Mamamayan Laban sa Kahirapan and Dislokasyon (Ugnayan).

"Although there were two barangay permits and a homeowners' association resolution, these were not valid. The barangay permits had no corresponding resolutions and minutes of meetings. The homeowners' association resolution was issued also without the minutes of meeting. Both also (were issued without) public hearings," Mangulabnan said.

Marucut said most of the SLRC residents do not want the high-tension electric wires above their houses because the power lines would endanger their health.

Mayor Pastor Guiao told the project's contractor and Sta. Lucia barangay officials to suspend the implementation of the project until public hearings were conducted. ***Jun Malig, PDI Central Luzon Desk***

Hundreds turn up at death anniversary of slain poll bet

By Ma. Diosa Labiste
PDI Visayas Bureau

SAN JOAQUIN, Iloilo—A long line of vehicles carrying a hundred mourners showed up last Saturday, to mark the first death anniversary of former San Joaquin Mayor Jesus Sibya.

The caravan, which started at St. Therese Memorial Chapel in Iloilo City, passed through the towns of Oton, Tigbauan, Guimbal, Miagao and San Joaquin. More than 30 vehicles joined the motorcade, which carried supporters wearing yellow T-shirts emblazoned with the words "Justice for Jesus Sibya."

It ended with a Mass at the tomb of the slain mayor attended by more than 200 supporters and friends of the Sibyas.

The caravan was a repeat of last year's motorcade when Sibya's remains were brought home. But unlike last year when the residents in this mountain town, 53 km from Iloilo City, were still in fear, they were more relaxed because the presence of police and Army soldiers has considerably thinned out.

Yet, those who turned up at the cemetery where Sibya was laid to rest said they are still mourning because one year after the death of the former mayor, justice has yet to be served.

Mayor Daisy Sibya, the widow, said the caravan was a call to prayer so that justice may come to her family and the people of San Joaquin.

Sibya, who replaced her slain husband to run as mayor and won the race, said that she is seeking divine intervention on her husband's case.

"I think this is how our justice system in the Philippines works. I can't understand why it is taking them this long. I don't know why they are delaying the proceedings," Daisy Sibya said. "We have to storm heaven with prayers so that justice would be served."

Jesus Sibya Jr. was gunned down in front of his house past 5 a.m. on May 11 last year, three days before the May 14 elections. One of the principal suspects in the killing was then incumbent reelectionist mayor Sebastian Serag.

Jesus Sibya has served San Joaquin as officer-in-charge from 1986 to 1987. He was elected for two terms as the town mayor in 1988 to 1998. He then ran for vice governor but lost in the 1998 elections.

Serag, who is now detained at the Iloilo Rehabilitation Center, was charged along with 15 others, including the incumbent vice mayor, Marilyn Silfavan, with the murder of Sibya and attempted murder of his driver Norberto Salamat III.

Last April 25, the much-awaited arraignment of the 16 accused was postponed when all four of the suspects' lawyers failed to show up in court. It prompted Judge Danilo Galvez of the Iloilo Regional Trial Court Branch 67 to move the arraignment to May 21.

Aside from Serag and Silfavan, also charged were Jose Oliver Segumalian, Thomix Segumalian, Vicente de la Cruz, Teoduro de la Cruz, Abraham de la Cruz, Eleazar Sañol, Roque Sanmillan, Nemesio Panugot, Edgar Sta. Cruz, the brothers Juan, Marcelino and Noel Napao, Rodolfo Talanquines and Barangay Balabago chief Lino Napao. The Napao brothers are still at large.

The lawyers who were a no-show were Cornelio Panes, Guillermo Alcantara, Igmedio Prado and Angelo Aninao.

In his homily last Saturday, Fr. Robert Amalay, assistant parish priest of San Joaquin, said that the caravan carries prayers and hope that dirty politics end in the first congressional district of Iloilo. He said that such politics caused the terrorism that ended the life of Jesus Sibya.

"Dirty politics can kill not only a person but also the dreams of a town," said Amalay.

SEN. LOI ESTRADA: Her colleagues at the Senate came to her defense to reject the subpoena from the Sandiganbayan JESS YUSON

Loi: Martyr for 43 years

From page A1

at the anti-graft court's most famous defendant: her own husband.

Asked about the possibility of arrest for her refusal to heed the summons, the wife of deposed President Joseph Estrada replied: *"Aarestuhin nila ako? Eh di magmumukha akong martir. Ayoko na kasing magmamartir ngayon kasi matagal na akong martir*, for 43 years (Arrest me? They'll make me look like a martyr. I don't want to be a martyr anymore because I've been one for 43 years)." She's been married to Estrada for that length of time.

The ex-President has admitted squiring many women and siring children out of wedlock. Famously, he introduced movie actress Guia Gomez as his first lady while he was mayor of San Juan town. Their son JV is now town mayor.

Lawyer Rene Saguisag, Estrada's former counsel, Sen. Estrada to disregard the court order.

"I just got a call from your loving husband very concerned (I trust you realize how lucky you are) about the subpoena received today directing you to appear in the Sandiganbayan on Wednesday," he wrote Ms. Estrada. "As a former Senator, my advice to you is not to appear so as not to compromise the integrity and independence of the body where your husband and I once served," Saguisag added.

Ejercito yesterday said she would not appear before the court because her privilege speech, the subject of a lawsuit filed by civil-society group PlunderWatch, was protected by parliamentary immunity.

United Senate

Yesterday, the Senate closed ranks behind Ms Estrada, saying the court order was constitutionally out of bounds.

"If indeed the complaint is based on Senator Estrada's privilege speech, I advise her to ignore the subpoena of the Sandiganbayan," Senate President Franklin Drilon said.

"As president of the Senate, I will protect and assert the independence of this institution as enshrined in the Constitution and none of its members will be made to answer before the judiciary for any statement uttered in the halls of Congress or in any of its committees," he added.

Parliamentary immunity is guaranteed under Article VI, Section 11, of the 1987 Constitution.

In a privilege speech, Senate Minority Leader Aquilino Pimentel Jr. attacked the subpoena. Pimentel said it was a "grievous error" on the part of the court to summon a senator to explain what she said on the Senate floor.

During the interpellation, Sen. Renato Cayetano said Sen. Joker Arroyo was correct in defending Ms Estrada's decision not to appear before the court. "This is one issue where we can all unite in the Senate," Cayetano said.

"This subpoena is a form of garbage. It does not mean anything. It can be ignored," he added.

Sen. John Osmeña said the order had raised senators' doubts about the quality of judges in the judiciary. Osmeña agreed with Sen. Blas Ople that this was a case of "ignorance of the law" on the part of the division which issued the subpoena.

Still liable

But Ombudsman Aniano Desierto, the lead prosecutor in the plunder case against ex-President Estrada, said Sen. Estrada could still be liable for issuing statement criticizing the integrity of the judiciary—despite her parliamentary immunity.

Desierto said that if the contemptuous statements were made during a privilege speech, "naturally there is immunity."

"But if the assailed statements were repeated outside the halls of Congress, then they are no longer covered by the rule of parliamentary immunity," he said.

Desierto said the senator could be answerable to the court if it were proven that she talked to reporters after her speech. INQUIRER reporters Cynthia Balana and Volt Contreras have also been subpoenaed.

But Desierto said that the matter should be left to the court.

"It's a matter between the court and those parties who issued the allegedly contemptuous remarks. It also depends upon the court if they will be required to answer for the derogatory statements."

In her March 12 speech, Ejercito accused the Supreme Court of bias against her husband. The senator delivered the speech after Estrada had openly attacked the judiciary for allegedly conspiring with the Macapagal administration to send him to jail.

Estrada also dismissed all his nine lawyers in protest over the allegedly partial proceedings at the Sandiganbayan.

Acting on the Plunderwatch motion, the Sandiganbayan ordered the ex-President, Senator Estrada, their son Jinggoy, and the former Estrada lawyers, Saguisag and Raymond Fortun, to appear before it on May 15 to answer the charges.

In his letter to Ms Estrada, which he circulated to the media, Saguisag said he and Fortun would not attend the May 15 hearing.

"For your information, Atty. Raymond Parsifal Fortun and I are not personally attending either, in view of other conflicting commitments. You stand on even higher ground on why you cannot honor the intent of the subpoena," Saguisag said.

'I've told my son his dad is a priest'

From page A1

support she was asking for, but also an admission of paternity from Sta. Maria.

"I have told my son who his father is," the woman said. "He deserves to hear something similar from his dad. My son's life will never be complete until he gets acceptance and recognition from his biological father."

But Fr. Francis Gustilo, SDB provincial head, said the order had not been remiss in helping the woman. He cited the reduced tuition as well as efforts to bring back Sta. Maria from abroad.

"In my three years (as provincial head of the order), I've done all I could," Gustilo said. "I've asked Father Sta. Maria to return from the US and face the issue here in the Philippines."

Gustilo said he would have the issue reinvestigated "in the interest of fairness and justice."

He expressed the hope that the issue would be resolved by September, when Sta. Maria returns from a three-year stint in the United States.

Nevertheless, Gustilo raised doubt as to the veracity of the woman's accusation, saying he knew Sta. Maria to be an upright man.

"The priest is also being framed," Gustilo said.

4 sessions

The woman said about four foreign SDB priests conducted an investigation regarding her pregnancy. But there were only four sessions held, she said, with Sta. Maria absent from each one.

"They asked whether there was a mark on Nick's body that I remember seeing," she said of the investigators' challenge for her to prove that Sta. Maria had indeed fathered her child.

She said she told them she could not recall any mark because they had sex only once in a Pasay City motel.

The woman said Sta. Maria brought her to the motel with the assurance that he only wanted to talk.

"After (making love), he assured me that he was going to ask for a dispensation, leave the priesthood and eventually marry me," she said.

The woman said she and the priest addressed each other with endearments during their relationship—she as "Bunny," and he as "Cheapmonk" (for "Chipmunk").

She showed the INQUIRER a number of love letters purportedly in his handwriting, some of which were written on "Don Bosco, Bacolor, Pampanga" and "Don Bosco Technical Institute" stationery.

The woman also said that on learning of her pregnancy, Sta. Maria offered to help keep it a secret and asked her to give the baby away to a childless relative of his.

"But I did not agree to it because my baby is not like a puppy that you give away after birth," she said, her eyes welling with tears.

She also showed the INQUIRER an envelope on which Gustilo, supposedly then the director of the Salesian publications, sketched directions on how to get to the Pro-Life Philippines institute in Pandacan, Manila, where she was to deliver the baby.

Aid, not support

The woman said that through the years, she had resorted to various means of seeking help.

In a letter dated Aug. 9, 2000, and addressed to Fr. Juan Vecchi, head of the SDB general council in Rome, she wrote: "Mine is not an isolated case. We all know that (these) things happen not only inside the Salesian community but also in other congregation(s). If the Salesians (can) help other children who (are) also in need, why can't they help my son?"

She said Sta. Maria had agreed early on to help fund the upkeep of the child, but that he had insisted that the money was "aid" from the SDB, not "child support."

"I believe that it is the right of my son to be given financial support by his father. Regardless (of the fact that) he is a priest, he still has the obligation to support his child," she said in the letter to Vecchi.

The woman said she received a response from Vecchi's office but that the letter was written in Italian.

She said an English translation of the letter was to this effect: that Vecchi acknowledged her complaint, that an evaluation with both parties present was necessary, and that it was hoped the matter could be resolved.

She said a portion of the letter also read: "You ought to know that the congregation cannot take responsibility for every word/action made in the Salesian congregation. There is also a personal responsibility..."

The woman said she had also sought help from lawyer Joseph Peter Sison of the Ipaglaban Mo Foundation.

On June 1, 2000, she said, Sison wrote Gustilo reminding him that under the Family Code, "it is the duty of the parents to support their children," and that "it is their moral and legal obligation to provide for their (children's) welfare."

She said nothing came out of the letter.

The woman said she also went to the "Bantay Bata" program of ABS-CBN years ago, but that she was told to get legal assistance from the Integrated Bar of the Philippines.

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'Accidental' . . .

From page A1

is an investigator at the San Pedro police precinct's women and children protection desk. She is also the mother of two children, a single parent.

The Zonta Club of Makati-Paseo de Roxas hands out the annual awards in cooperation with the Philippine National Police. Torrefranca beat four other contenders from all over the country.

"I did not expect this," Torrefranca said upon hearing the news last Thursday. "I am the lowest-ranking officer among the awardees."

The rest of the 26 nominees in all 10 categories hold the ranks of senior superintendent, superintendent, chief inspector, and senior inspector.

This is the second award in a row for Torrefranca, who was recently named Police Non-Commissioned Officer, Outstanding Women and Children Desk Officer in the Southern Mindanao police command.

The other TOPWP categories are Investigation, Anti-Narcotics, Intelligence, Traffic Management, Special Operations, Human Resource Development, Criminalistics (for those detailed in crime laboratories), Health Service, and Administrative Support Services.

The 2001 search started last November. Candidates were nominated by their immediate superiors, and endorsed by their barangay chairs, parish priests, and city or town mayors.

Torrefranca entered the service in September 1997 after five years as a clinical instructor at the San Pedro College.

"I was aiming for the City Health Office. But when the Davao City police announced openings for new recruits, I signed up. After only six months at the training center, I knew I would stay."

Torrefranca and the nine other TOPWP winners will receive their awards in Manila next week.

The 5 and Up club invites kids ages 6 to 14 to summer art workshops at the different Don Henrico's branches. Check out which place, schedule and workshop fits you best!

Branch	Date/Time	Workshop
Libis	May 15/ 9-12pm	Basic Drawing
	1-4pm	Origami Art
Jupiter St., Makati	May 16/ 9-12pm	Basic Drawing
	1-4pm	Decor Making for all occasions
Festival Mall, Alabang	May 23/ 9-12pm	Origami Art
	1-4pm	Greeting Card Making
Tomas Morato	May 24/ 9-12pm	Basic Mask Making
	1-4pm	Book Illustration and Drawing

Each Workshop is just P150 (inclusive of snacks and materials). What are you waiting for? Cut out this form and check the workshop that you would like to attend. Then fax to 9216917 or call 9229273 and look for Catherine. Deposit the fee to our BPI account (Savings Account number 3983-0058-41, Account name: Probe Media Foundation, Inc) Fax us a copy of the deposit slip.

Name:________________ Telephone number/s: ________
Age:________ Fax:________________

PROBE 5 UP Don Henrico's

United Declaration of the First Philippine Political Parties Conference

Manila Hotel, Manila, Philippines • May 3-5, 2002

We, the heads and special representatives of national, regional/local parties and party-list groups, having met in Manila on 3-5 May 2002, for the first in history, the purpose of making democratic institutions work better to achieve genuine national sovereignty, economic independence and progress, a high standard of living, social justice and the rule of law by moderating political conflict through the universal adoption of civil rules of political engagement and crafting a common vision and agreeing upon the political and economic reforms that will achieve it, hereby declare:

1st PHILIPPINE POLITICAL PARTIES CONFERENCE

2. We therefore condemn all machinations and conspiracies and other forms of destabilization. We believe that democratic practice connotes constant debate on all issues affecting the public interest. And this must be differentiated from constant combat that puts the constitutional order on the line at every turn.

3. We are encouraged to come together and forge an agreement of a common legislative agenda reached by both houses of Congress. This gathering supports the Medium Term Philippine Development Plan by strengthening the country's political structures that will create the stable political and social environment conducive to faster economic growth and sustainable development.

4. We are likewise inspired and impelled by the examples of neighboring countries which achieved fast economic growth by a conscious decision on the part of their political parties, politicians, bureaucrats and civil society who rallied around a clear national development agenda and backed it up with a strong and united political will.

5. We hope to take advantage of the economic window of opportunity for recovery and growth provided by the low inflation rate, low interest rates, a stable currency and the strengthening of stock market prices-all in the first year of the Arroyo administration. We shall build on these gains to achieve sustainable development and help put to an end the habitual Philippine economic cycles of boom and bust.

What went wrong?

6. We are acutely aware that our economy lags behind that of almost all the other countries in East and Southeast Asia. Our economy has faltered because of mistaken policies, distorted priorities, instances of mistaken foreign dictation and multilateral advice. Under pressure from powerful interest groups or due to political inertia we have failed to adopt policies when radically changed circumstance clearly called for decisive policy shifts.

7. Rent-seeking and crony capitalism diverted national resources from productive economic activities and discouraged the rise of an entrepreneurial class. Factionalism, patronage and bossism, along with the failure to adopt decisive policies to help the economy and the people to cope with the challenges and consequences of globalization, contributed to the crisis in our economy, with the result that social inequity and mass poverty incidence in our country are the highest in East Asia.

8. The Philippines still has the longest running communist insurgency in the world and a recurring threat of a full-blown Muslim secessionist war, not to mention endemic and epidemic organized crime.

9. A weak party system makes government vulnerable to the dictates of powerful interest groups in politics and the economy. Dealmaking and trading favors to build fragile coalitions behind candidates and programs elevate operators rather statesmen to positions of power and authority in the state.

A SHARED VISION OF WHAT THIS COUNTRY CAN BECOME

10. As we strive to overcome factionalism, we must arrive at a common vision of what we want this country to become.

10a. We seek the profound modernization of our country without losing traditional values.

10b. We envision a country without mass poverty, whose economy is competitive abroad while protecting jobs and increasing purchasing power at home.

10c. We want a working democracy where the political leadership and the policies and programs of government reflect the popular will. We want a political culture that is proof against tyranny and intolerant of incompetence and corruption.

10d. We want a country that is diverse in character, reflective of the richness of its cultural life, yet firmly united as one people and one nation

AN AGENDA FOR POLITICAL ACTION

Making democracy work among us

11. We stand behind the call for good government. Only under such an environment can proper taxes be collected, rampant criminality deterred, lawless violence suppressed, and judicial decisions respected for their justice. Together with government and society at large, we shall work for a bureaucracy which renders rather than delays, if it delivers at all, public service; police that fight crimes instead of committing or abetting them; a military which finds and fights the enemies of our country; a judiciary which renders justice, and an executive that upholds all the laws, preventing crime and punishing its commission, facilitating efficient public service instead of promoting corruption, tolerating incompetence and patronage politics; a legislature that enacts progressive laws and watches out for the genuine public interest rather than its own.

12. Corruption discredits the state, undermines respect for its authority, and weakens its ability to get even its proper work done. Official discretion in the matter of granting awards, incentives and other privileges fosters corruption. Discretion should be curtailed and substituted with clear and detailed rules and regulations that leave little room for corruptible judgment.

13. While we must adjust our nationalism to accommodate a progressively globalizing world economy and politics, we cannot entrust the protection of our country and the advancement of our economic interests to foreigners, foreign governments or multilateral institutions. In the last analysis, only we Filipinos can be trusted to take care of ourselves and our posterity, our country and our national interests.

SPECIFIC POLITICAL REFORMS THAT WE AGREE ARE NECESSARY

14. Our common agenda is political reform to make democracy work, structural reforms to get the economy to grow faster, law and order to make civil society possible, and national security to preserve and protect the Filipino homeland.

15. Philippine democracy cannot continue to ignore the interests and demands of those at the bottom of society. Reforms in this area should include making the votes of the very poor truly reflect their interests, and, through electoral reforms particularly the full automation of elections by 2004, making the vote in general more faithfully reflect the popular choices.

16. Local sectoral elections in the Local Government Code should be implemented with the appropriate legislation no later than the end of this year. Because of the extraordinarily large proportion of our population working abroad and contributing greatly to economic development at home, it is imperative to extend to them the means to vote in national elections. To that end, an absentee voting law shall be enacted within the month. To reduce political corruption and to protect political parties from the pressure of powerful special interests upon which they at present depend, campaign finance reforms are essential, in particular the grant of state subsidies to political parties combined with a ban on turncoatism. Without such measures there will always be a threat that the demands of the marginalized will be expressed in socially disruptive ways.

17. A system of strong, coherent and highly disciplined platforms-based parties, particularly those who claim to represent the poorest of the poor, will stabilize our constantly shifting political alliance networks, replace personalized power relations with durable political institutions, and give those who need it most the organized and therefore effective influence to improve their condition.

Major constitutional changes

18. To fully modernize Philippine politics and bring it closer to the democratic ideal, a process of building broad consensus on Constitutional Reform must be started. We assert that it is now necessary to introduce major changes to the present charter in a manner that is open, transparent and broadly participatory. Because of the nature of the revisions required, and the conflicts of interest certain to arise in the Congress, there is a strong sentiment in support of a Constitutional Convention elected in 2004 to propose the changes.

19. We must further enhance the authority, responsibilities, and financial resources of local governments so as to encourage local autonomy and cultural diversity and the establishment of vibrant local economies.

20. To correct the existing gender imbalance in our political and economic life, we must implement appropriate mechanisms with the end in view of making women's political participation proportionate and more substantive as well as implement policies and programs to effect full women's potentials in our economic life.

Bridging the social and economic gap

21. To address the age-old problem of unequal access among our Muslim communities and indigenous Peoples to economic opportunities and to the benefits of participation in the social and political mainstream, there must be due and proper recognition of their rights and cultural heritage; urgent and adequate action on their basic needs, infrastructure and development requirements; and full and immediate implementation of laws and programs designed to assist them. To bridge the social and economic gap separating our Muslim communities and Indigenous Cultural Communities (ICCs) from the majority, immediately and aggressively implement a national policy and programs within 2002 to bring up Human Development Indicators for Muslims (including those outside of ARMM) and ICCs to the level of Mindanao averages within the next six years.

22. To ensure more transparency and greater accountability in both the public and private sectors, we shall strengthen Freedom of Information to allow greater access to all information regarding any matter vested with a public interest.

23. While we accept that special interest groups are a part of the national electoral process, and recognize their right to lobby openly for their own agenda, we must require them to register with Congress as provided by existing law. The law shall be amended to make failure to register a criminal offense.

24. The rule of law depends on a credible justice system based on public perception of its wisdom in rule-making and impartiality and fairness in decisions. The public perception is that we have two types of law, one for the rich and one for the poor. Many people believe that, for the right price, a favorable outcome can be had from the justice system, imparting to our justice system the damaging image of being capricious and corrupt.

A system of alternative dispute resolution

25. Our court system's main problems are lengthy proceedings and inconclusive, not to mention unpredictable results despite lip service paid to precedents. We must make our justice system swift, fair, clear, and based on the laws. To this end, we shall substantially increase the appropriations for the judiciary in the next national budget in return for which we shall expect decisive reforms in this branch of government.

There are about one million cases pending, from the lowest courts all the way to the Supreme Court. We strongly support the initiative to put in place a system of alternative dispute resolution in every region and province of the land to help reduce the paralysis in the system and prevent the further clogging of the courts. We shall review the relevance of the Judicial and Bar Council.

26. We need to build knowledge and social capital for a just and humane society in the age of globalization. A sound technical and scientific education is the basis of economic development in this age. We shall emphasize science and mathematics in the curriculum. We must acknowledge the emergence of the "knowledge society," which is dividing the globe into the world of the skilled and the world of the unskilled. As a beginning, we must strive to match the 19%-20% of the budget that our neighbor-states spend on basic education. We shall discipline computer and other schools that fail to impart employable skills to their students and scrutinize college assurance plans that pay for less than a sound and adequate education in employable disciplines and skills.

27. In designing public education systems, and in the formulation of our laws, we should be cognizant of the United Nations Declaration of Human Rights, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights which the Philippines has ratified.

28. Globalization is a reality, an opportunity and a danger. To the extent that it is an inescapable reality, we must make our workers and our products more competitive in the world. To the extent that it is an opportunity, we must exploit globalization to our advantage. To the extent that it can have devastating consequences, especially in the vulnerable sectors of the community, we must take protective measures to moderate it. We do not believe that it is necessary to destroy the economy in order to globalize it.

Social safety nets for the maginalized

29. To reduce poverty in our society, we must not only create more wealth in the economy but arrange for more fair economic entitlements and distributions of the national wealth while putting up social safety nets for the marginalized. Significantly reducing mass poverty will take the Philippines 10 years with an average growth rate of 7 percent. This is hard but not impossible to achieve. Our neighbors have done it.

30. That three out of four poor Filipino families live in rural areas and are dependent on agriculture is reason enough to give the highest priority to modernizing agricultural practices, improving its infrastructure network, and increasing its support systems, particularly infrastructure, shipping and ports. With food security assured, along with the appropriate entitlements to the poorest of our people, we must enhance the ability of the poor to take part in wealth creation. To that end, we shall focus on the adequate provision of primary health care and sound basic education, including technical training. As a start, we shall index the budgets for basic education and primary health care to the growth of the gross domestic product. We shall realign the health budget-which is heavily oriented toward the upkeep of tertiary hospitals that the poor hardly use-to increase the share of primary health care programs.

31. We declare in the strongest terms our support for environment protection programs, the planting of one billion trees to reforest our bald mountains as well as the regeneration of our lost marine resources.

32. To enhance our country's competitiveness, we must give tax incentives for genuine research and product development, identify and eliminate the bottlenecks responsible for the high cost of food which makes our labor cost globally uncompetitive, and lower the cost of doing business by reducing if not altogether eliminate the bureaucratic requirements of the national and local governments for setting up a business.

Improving the tax effort

33. We realize our urgent need to reduce the fiscal deficit and improve the tax effort, which is the lowest among the major ASEAN countries.

33a. Government must reduce its borrowing and rely more heavily on the payment of proper taxes. To that end, we shall require the strict enforcement of tax laws and plug loopholes in the laws that permit taxes to be avoided as soon as they are discovered.

33b. In light of successful fiscal reforms in some African and Latin American countries, we shall reconstitute and reorganize the BIR into a more autonomous and professional organization with greater incentives and accountability for results and stronger powers to discipline its work force.

34. However efficient, government cannot substitute for private initiative and personal responsibility. Democratic government must encourage civic duty-the sense of community, of national loyalty, of being responsible for one another-in the only credible way: through the examples of its public officials.

35. Without order, there can be no economic activity. National security is the government's first concern.

35a. We deplore the continuing epidemic of kidnapping, drug-dealing, contract-killing, gambling, lawless violence and other heinous crimes perpetrated individually and by criminal syndicates, with or without a political pretext.

35b. We endorse continuing efforts to achieve meaningful and enduring peace based on the fundamental economic, social and cultural interest of the Filipino people. To this end, we fully support the ceasefire and on-going peace negotiations with the MILF, the continuing negotiations with the NPA and NDF, and the full implementation of the 1996 agreement with the MNLF.

35c. We must end the participation of elements of the military and the police, as well as local government officials, in kidnapping, the narcotic drug trade and in other organized crimes.

FOREIGN RELATIONS

36. We support our country's involvement in regional and global organizations, such as ASEAN and the United Nations, but without compromising our commitments to the advancement of human rights and democracy throughout the world.

37. It is our hope to help bring about Asian political and economic cooperation and integration as the formula for peace and development and to contain big-power nationalism in Asia and to support initiatives for the creation of an ASEAN parliament, the Asian monetary fund, and the Asian Free Trade Area, in that respect following the lead taken by the North American and European free trade areas as gradual steps towards completely globalized economies. We believe that as in the gradualist step taken by the nations of Europe, our initiatives will someday lead to an Asian community.

38. We urge Asian political parties to continue reaching out to each other-across ideological and cultural barriers-in search of shared solutions to common problems, in the spirit of the first meeting of major ruling and opposition political parties from 21 Asian countries held in Manila in September 2000.

39. Our increasingly-interdependent world needs new premises for channeling the relationships of the developed and developing economies. It needs a world-wide civil society movement that can shape ethical globalization-and promote respect, tolerance and solidarity among all peoples.

40. Beyond the anti-terrorist campaign, we believe the time is ripe for opening a dialogue between religions and cultures. We urge world leaders to initiate the dialogue between civilizations being encouraged by the United Nations and the ecumenism being promoted by Pope John Paul II. We particularly endorse the Philippine proposal for global Muslim-Christian dialogue to help reduce the politico-religion, ethnic and communal tensions and conflict in Mindanao, Sudan, Nigeria, South Asia and Central Asia, age-old conflicts that have once again exploded in the 21st Century.

41. We believe multicultural understanding is the most important basis for the long-term security of the global community.

CONCLUDING STATEMENT

42. The threat to our political system is not so much the return of dictatorship as the progressive loss of its relevance to the Filipino people for failing to meet their long denied basic needs and for failing to provide a perceptible measure of good and effective government.

43. We agree that the Philippine Political Parties Conferences should become regular feature of national politics. We have created a Standing Committee to continue discussions on our common political agenda and the means to implement this agenda.

44. We hereby adopt, affirm and incorporate all resolutions and workshop reports as forming part of this United Declaration as basis for our collective action.

Adopted this fifth day of May 2002, in Manila, Philippines.

FPPP Conference Signatories

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Secretary General, PDSP

Mr. LUIS C. CORRAL
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Mr. RONAAAL P. I. ADAMAT
Secretary General, TRICAP

Highlights

In the first meeting in Philippine history of national and regional parties, party-list groups and leaders of civil society, political party leaders declare the following specific actions to strengthen governance and our democratic system and modernize the political parties in a 44-point United Declaration:

- *We condemn all machinations and conspiracies to destabilize the government.*
- *We approve the full computerization of elections by 2004 to end "dagdag bawas" and election fraud and make elections reflect the people's genuine voice.*
- *We fully endorse passage of the Absentee Voting Bill to enable 7 million overseas Filipinos to vote in national elections.*
- *We endorse state subsidies to political parties under a campaign reform finance measure to reduce political corruption, to deter the influence of narcotic syndicates and vice lords in national elections, and to end turncoatism -- the balimbing system -- once and for all.*
- *We assert the need to introduce "major changes" in the Constitution to bring Philippine politics closer to the democratic ideal, and we support a Constitutional Convention elected in 2004 to propose the changes.*
- *We support the initiative to create a system of alternative dispute resolution in every province to unclog the courts, where some one million cases are pending.*
- *We support programs for environmental protection, the planting of one billion trees to reforest our bald mountains, and the regeneration of lost marine resources.*
- *We ask that peace negotiations with the New People's Army and the Moro Islamic Liberation Front be advanced, leading to cessation of hostilities and demobilization of forces in final peace agreements.*
- *We support the initiative to help bring about Asian political and economic integration -- such as the creation of an ASEAN parliament, an Asian monetary fund, and an Asian Free Trade area -- as the formula for peace and development.*
- *We support the initiative to open a dialogue among cultures and civilizations, and endorse the Philippine proposal for a global Christian-Muslim dialogue to help reduce the religious, ethnic and cultural tensions and conflict in Mindanao, Indonesia, Sudan, Nigeria, Kosovo, Lebanon, Palestine, Russia, the Balkans, South Asia and Central Asia.*
- *We seek dramatic reductions in the level of poverty, social safety nets for the marginalized, and a sustained 7% economic growth rate for the poor to cross over into the threshold of the middle class.*

Now, 2 lawmakers propose to 'renationalize' power firms

By Christine Avendaño

SAN JUAN Rep. Ronaldo Zamora and Iloilo Rep. Rolex Suplico are set to file a bill next week seeking to allow the government to "nationalize" fully or partially private companies involved in the power industry, such as generation and distribution firms and even independent power producers.

Zamora told reporters that the bill he and Suplico are proposing aims to "take a look at re-nationalizing this vital part of our industry," noting that the measure will enable "people who are paying for the power . . . end up owning the capacity for that power."

Suplico said that the bill would authorize the government "on a selective basis" to nationalize private firms involved in the power industry.

Meanwhile, the president of the agency tasked to oversee the privatization of the National Power Corp. said yesterday that five of the 35 independent power producers that are under contract to supply power to the National Power Corp. have offered to renegotiate their contracts.

Public Sector Assets and Liabilities Management (PSALM) president Edgardo Delfonso told members of the House minority that the talks were in various stages and that two of the IPPs "were talking about buying out of contracts while another one is for outright cancellation."

But Delfonso told reporters he could not identify the five IPPs who offered to renegotiate. PSALM would need to wait for the results of the ongoing review of the inter-agency committee before proceeding with the talks.

Malacañang formed the IPP review committee to take a second look at the 35 IPP contracts which many believe to be onerous and disadvantageous to the government.

Asked about the impact on purchased power adjustment costs of the five IPP contracts being renegotiated, Delfonso replied: "It's not going to be very substantial in the context of overall obligation but every little thing helps."

"It's not as if we're going to wipe out the good part of it, but we will be able to save money," he added.

Before evidence is in . . .

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economy did not happen."

Meanwhile, the justice department disclosed yesterday that the Energy Regulatory Commission had already started renegotiating power contracts to further reduce power rates, following the President's suspension of the PPA.

Justice Undersecretary Manuel A. J. Teehankee, spokesperson for the justice department, said the ERC renegotiation involved existing contracts between "government entities" such as the Philippine National Oil Company-Energy Development Corp. (PNOC-EDC) and the National Power Corp. (NPC).

"This will remove any hidden costs or mark-ups," said Teehankee, a member of the inter-agency committee which also includes the Department of Finance and the National Economic Development Authority.

Independent power producers, which have contracts with the NPC amounting to $10 billion, are being blamed for the high cost of electricity being shouldered by consumers.

Under the contracts, the NPC is obliged to buy power from them at a steep price and even pay for excess electricity generated. The cost is then passed to distributors like the Manila Electric Co. which in turn charge consumers in the form of the controversial PPA.

"If you listen to the explanation of President Ramos, they had several assumptions in connection with the IPPs, particularly the growth of the economy," the President said. "So they had to prepare the capacity (of the power industry) commensurate to the expected growth rate," she also said.

"Then from the year 2000, the economy also crashed," Ms Macapagal said. Given these circumstances, she said, the best option for the government is to renegotiate the contracts.

"If it was force majeure, if there was an error in projection because we did not anticipate the Asian crisis and the BW scandal, then what we should do is renegotiate the contracts," she said, adding that because of the country's improved international credit standing, it would not be difficult to "restructure" the contracts.

Immediate renegotiation

Teehankee told reporters the national government could initiate a renegotiation based on the Electric Power Industry Reform Act of 2001.

"Under Section 69 of the Act, there is also a mandate from Congress to immediately renegotiate these contracts. So the act mandates a thorough review and other actions if necessary as well as a complete renegotiation of these contracts," he said.

Teehankee was referring to the provision on the renegotiation of power purchase and energy conversion agreements between government entities.

The provision covers agreements involving the Palinpinon, Tongonan and Mt. Apo Geothermal complexes, and other power purchase deals with PNOC and NPC.

It says that the agreements shall be reviewed by the ERC and "the terms thereof amended to remove any hidden costs or extraordinary mark-ups in the cost of power or steam above their true costs."

All amended contracts shall be submitted to the joint congressional power commission for approval. The law says that the ERC shall ensure that all savings realized from the reduction of the mark-ups shall be passed on to all end-users.

Teehankee said that the renegotiation started even before the inter-agency committee wrapped up its investigation. "Even without the review being finished, there is a separate provision of the law, Section 69, that mandates renegotiation," he stressed.

When asked to name names, he said: "There (are) already some contracts under renegotiation. That is not under the committee jurisdiction but the Department of Energy."

He added that, as mandated by the Electric Power Industry Reform Act, the committee chaired by Secretary of Finance Isidro Camacho "is due to submit a report in June on the result of (its) review of IPP contracts."

"Not a report of these findings can be released until the completion of these different aspects of the review. So as of now, no finding had been made by the committee," said Teehankee, as he denied a report published on Saturday that the inter-agency committee had found 10 contracts to be "injudicious."

He said that the inter-agency committee was fast-tracking the probe "to finish at least 10 of these contracts by end of May."

He also pointed out that the review and renegotiation were two separate provisions of the law. "One mandates an automatic renegotiation while the other a thorough review of the contracts."

He added: "The review is to find out which are onerous or disadvantageous to the government and to recommend appropriate actions. And then there's also a mandate to renegotiate."

Rising obligations

In the Senate, an opposition senator warned that Filipino consumers will have to cough up an additional P20.5 billion over a 20-year period to pay the NPC's rising obligations to independent power producers.

Sen. Teresa Aquino-Oreta noted that, with the President's suspension of the PPA, the government will have no choice but to allow the NPC to borrow an additional $100 million this year to cover for its losses caused by decreased PPA collections.

And once the refinancing of the NPC's debts starts, Oreta claimed, another $350 million would be required.

"This would translate to P22.5 billion that consumers would have to shoulder as a consequence of Malacañang's decision to scout for the easy way out to the problem of high electricity rates, instead of the more consumer-friendly long-term solution of renegotiating IPP contracts," she said.

Apparently not aware that renegotiations had already started, Oreta urged Malacañang to heed calls for the speedy review of these transactions with the end of view of benefiting consumers in the form of electricity rates with no strings of multi-billion peso debts attached," she said.

At the finance department, Sec. Jose Isidro Camacho assailed his critics, particularly those from the Freedom from Debt Coalition, for finding fault but refusing to help solve the problem.

"I take exception to the criticism of that NGO (non-government organization) that I was not doing my job. The problem with these groups is that they openly criticize but when you ask for help, they are not around," he said.

The finance secretary said the committee had invited an official of the anti-debt coalition to help in the review of the IPP contracts. "I asked one of their heads to be one of our consultants. But they turned us down," he noted.

Camacho also said that even if he wanted to quit from the IPP review committee, the law says he cannot. ***With reports from Clarissa Batino and Rocky Nazareno***

Economists turn to sushi . . .

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mixed signals, economists are turning to such unconventional indicators to gauge what's happening.

That's why the Federal Reserve Bank of Dallas was so interested in sales of singing gorillas in its anecdotal "beige book" that taps consumers and local firms for their take on the economy's health.

The gorilla craze—and more importantly the fact that people were willing to splurge on frivolous toys—was taken as a sign the economy was perking up last year.

Singing gorillas may be no worse a guide than predictions made by Wall Street's number crunchers. Many US stock analysts, for instance, forecast a 20-percent gain in the benchmark Standard & Poor's 500 index in 2001. The index fell 13 percent.

"Consumers, like chief executives, know what's happening now, whereas data, which economists largely use, is backward looking. That's why economists often turn to more anecdotal stuff," said David Hale, global economist at Zurich Financial Services.

Blame the weather

Farmers need reliable weather forecasts to guide their crop planting. In the same way, companies, finance ministers, central bankers and individuals need accurate economic forecasts to plan everything from buying a house to ordering raw materials or setting a nation's interest rates.

When the data looks fuzzy, economists turn elsewhere.

Well-stocked shelves in Zambian stores may suggest an economy that is doing far better than government statistics tell.

That's the view of Stanley Fischer, a former deputy managing director of the International Monetary Fund and now a vice chair of Citigroup.

On a recent visit to Zambia, his country of birth, he noticed local shops had a much broader and deeper range of products than he recalled from earlier visits.

"It made me think that maybe the government statistics showing GDP (gross domestic product) was falling were a little off the mark," he said on the sidelines of a financial conference in Shanghai.

Speaking at the same event, Hale said that Shanghai's commercial power could be better judged not by its forest of gleaming skyscrapers but by the number of its golf courses.

"The 14 golf courses show the Chinese are opening up to the West and have leisure time," he said.

Hale also has a New York sushi bar index that he uses as a rough gauge of the strength of the Japanese economy.

The premise is that the more Japanese visitors there are in New York to do business, the more sushi bars there will be.

The index now stands at around half its peak of 187 bars set in 1991, two years after the Nikkei 225 average of Japanese shares hit its peak. That may mean the stock market is a better guide than sushi. But Hale says that one backs up the other.

Shoeshine

Anecdotal indicators can be misleading though.

A senior New York-based investment manager said for a long time his definition of a shaky economy had been a country where he was offered a shoeshine within an hour of arriving.

Receiving no shoeshine offer on a trip in mid-2001 to Buenos Aires, he concluded the country was in better shape than grim economic data suggested. This led him to underestimate the extent of Argentina's eventual economic and financial collapse.

Measuring the US economy or a less developed economy like China's with total precision is impossible, but detecting turning points can allow major investors to make or lose millions of dollars.

Some economists, wary of China's official statistics showing strong growth of more than 7 percent in 2001, rely on the electricity statistics, thinking this should correlate well with industrial output. That's if they believe the power data.

Maybe the best solution is not to look forward at all.

The US National Bureau of Economic Research waited until November to declare a US recession that began in the previous March. ***Reuters***

PCGG won't pay for info on Swiss loot

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Yorac said the PCGG knew there had been "secret" transfers of Marcos funds "before and after" the March 1986 freeze imposed by the Swiss Federal Council.

Since 1999

In fact, since 1999, the PCGG has been secretly following up information on the illegal Marcos fund transfers done before and after the freeze, according to the PCGG chair.

According to documents the PCGG furnished reporters yesterday, the funds came not only from Credit Suisse, but also from four other Swiss banks—Compagne Banque et d' Investissements, Geneva; Compagnie de Gestion et de Banque Gonet SA, Nyon; Affida Bank; and, Bank in Lucerne, Lucerne.

Besides Limag AG, four other Liechtenstein foundations—Aurora, Carmello, Palmonte and Lasano—were involved.

The PCGG also has information on fund transfers involving deposits of former first lady Imelda Marcos in Credit Suisse under Palmy Foundation. The funds were moved by Administral Anstalt, also based in Vaduz, Liechtenstein, in April 1989.

"We are following up information and putting the documents together to find out how we can trace them on the basis of rules of evidence and in accordance with the IMAC procedures," Yorac said, referring to the International Mutual Assistance on Criminal Matters.

If the PCGG were to go after Credit Suisse and certain entities like Fides and Limag AG in Liechtenstein, it would have to establish first that "there was an evasion of the freeze," she said.

As of the moment, there is even information that certain Swiss entities, including these foundations, violated the 1986 Swiss freeze order.

"We are reading a lot of documents very closely and analyzing them," Yorac said.

"If there was a denial that there was any movement (of funds), and then, in fact, there was a movement, there is misrepresentation for which I think people should be held responsible," she said.

The PCGG chair said that Swiss laws would have to apply against individuals found to have violated the freeze order.

The PCGG believes that the $356 million frozen by Switzerland in March 1986 was just a part of the Marcos loot.

IMELDA MARCOS: Money hidden by the usual suspects is emerging in Liechtenstein. FILE PHOTO/RYAN HERNANDEZ

EDWIN BACASMAS

HAYDEE YORAC: PCGG knows about the secret fund transfers of the Marcos funds before and after the freeze imposed by the Swiss government in March 1986.

Not stupid

"We are not stupid to think that this is all. The thing is that between the time there was the declaration of the freeze and the time that the Marcoses left the country, there was a three-week lull," Yorac said.

PCGG Commissioner Ruben Carranza said that as early as 1999, the PCGG already had information "involving both accounts traceable to the Marcoses and transfer of funds from these accounts."

Carranza said the PCGG also knew that Credit Suisse, Limag AG, and Fides had been involved in the transfers.

"In December 2000, the PCGG asked the Swiss authorities for more information on these foundations, on these transfers. A request was made in January 2001, and then some of the banks involved, particularly Credit Suisse, were summoned by the district attorney of Zurich to clarify the matters raised by the PCGG," he said.

He said that this was done during the time of former PCGG Chair Magdangal Elma.

Carranza said that Credit Suisse submitted "clarifications sometime in March 15, and July 13, 2001."

By August of 2001, District Attorney Dieter Jann submitted to the PCGG "these clarifications involving these foundations and their accounts."

Carranza said PCGG officials were "not satisfied" with the clarification of Credit Suisse.

The PCGG said that it had already drafted a supplemental request to further clarify the (Credit Suisse) response.

"Some of the items in the supplemental request are precisely included in the subject matter of that newspaper report," he said, referring to the INQUIRER report on Madame Z's offer to provide the Philippine government information.

Complicated

"It appears that after the freeze on Marcos deposits was made by the Swiss Federal Banking Commission on March 24, 1986, there were still some movements of some accounts in April that same year," Carranza said.

"These movements are too complicated to discuss here. Suffice it to say that some of the entities mentioned in the report were involved in these transfers," he said, confirming the INQUIRER report.

Carranza said there was an "ongoing effort by the commission to verify each and every detail of the transfers."

"For the moment, I can mention the name of the foundation we are focusing on. The name of the foundation is Lalag Corp., which appears to be a Marcos foundation but for some reason, the name was changed to Galalsa Foundation," he said.

Carranza said that the PCGG was "now verifying the involvement of various banks and their subsidiaries that then used further subsidiaries of banks."

"This is where that report is connected. Some minor subsidiaries down the line appear to be involved. We are not just focusing on that aspect as mentioned in that report. There is a larger set of transactions that we're after," he said.

Payment problems

On the demand of the witness' lawyers for payment, Carranza said the PCGG had "some problems in paying a witness."

He said that the PCGG witnesses so far were either Filipinos who were just promised "immunity" from suit in exchange for their testimony, or those who testified on their own "afraid that they (would) be prosecuted."

"A further problem with paying a witness is the witness becomes a paid witness," Carranza said.

"We have not set a rule on commissions. Suffice it to say that that has not been done by the PCGG," he said.

He said that this was the same problem the PCGG had with Australian investigator Reiner Jacobi.

Royalty helping Marcoses hide $400-million loot

From page A1

Only $356 million in Marcos Swiss deposits was covered by the freeze, an amount lower than the $400 million, which Madame Z claimed evaded the March 24, 1986 Swiss freeze order on Marcos accounts.

Her testimony in the French National Assembly on May 25, 2000 was mostly about her knowledge of the illegal trafficking of body parts from Russia, which was financed by Norbert Seeger, her former employer in Liechtenstein.

The testimony also touched on the movement of Marcos money from Switzerland to Liechtenstein and on the involvement of a Liechtenstein prince in the cover-up.

Prince Constantin was appointed to the board of Limag AG a few months after $400 million was transferred to the Credit Suisse subsidiary.

The witness said she had learned that Prince Constantin had earned a lot from managing Limag AG. But the prince brought with him his knowledge of the Marcos money to his grave. He died on March 28, 2001 in Grabs, Switzerland. He was 89.

Limag AG was one of Liechtenstein firms that the Swiss and Liechtenstein trustees of the Marcoses used to hide their funds, according to Swiss bank documents provided by Swiss authorities to the Philippine government.

Other Marcos foundations

The bank records confirmed the connection of Limag AG to the Marcos family and other Liechtenstein foundations—Vibur Foundation, Avertina Foundation and Palmy Foundation whose funds were part of the $356 million frozen in March 1986.

Before the French National Assembly, the witness testified: "A few months after the arrival of the Marcos money, the uncle of the prince (of Liechtenstein) was appointed chair of the board of this fiduciary in Vaduz which belongs to the Group of Bank X (Credit Suisse). He was engaged in this position, even though he was a very old man, and earned a lot of money."

"Everyone is bought in Liechtenstein. That is the real problem," she said.

The witness was referring to Prince Constantin, who she said had been "bought" by Credit Suisse.

Madame Z got the information while she was working for KPMG Zurich in 1997, while she was assigned to the Credit Suisse Group account.

She participated in several discussions on the disposition of Marcos funds, according to a letter her lawyer submitted to Executive Secretary Alberto Romulo. The lawyer belongs to the US firm Blank Rome Comisky & McCauley LLP.

According to her initial proffer of evidence to the Philippine government, Liechtenstein was initially "unhappy" with the Marcos funds being transferred to Liechtenstein.

"Limag AG resolved the problems with Liechtenstein by appointing a prince of that principality, His Serene Highness Prince Constantine, to the board of Limag AG," her lawyer's letter to the Philippine government said.

Madame Z also told the French National Assembly that Liechtenstein seemed to "constitute the service gateway used by the criminal capital of dictators to escape from Switzerland where the presence of such assets is increasingly undesirable."

Bank secrecy

Liechtenstein has a land area of 65 square miles and a population of about 32,000. But Liechtenstein is a giant among offshore financial centers and tax havens. It is reputed to be the third richest country in the world. Its bank secrecy laws are stricter than Switzerland's.

"At the moment when Switzerland wanted to sequester the Marcos funds, Bank X transferred them to a small fiduciary agency in Liechtenstein," Madame Z said in her testimony. She identified Bank X as Credit Suisse.

"You wish to say that the uncle of the Prince of Liechtenstein, Constantin, is the head of the fiduciary organization that received the funds of Marcos? Are the funds (still) in Liechtenstein today?" asked Arnaud Montebourg, the rapporteur, during her testimony.

The witness answered: "That was the case when I left the bank (in 1997), which dismissed me when it learned that I knew where the Marcos money was located, and how great were the earnings at KPMG and at the Bank X (Credit Suisse) in relation to this. The bank knew at the time, when Switzerland wanted to sequester the funds of Marcos that Bank X had transferred them to a small Liechtenstein fiduciary agency. Nevertheless, it was a little difficult at the political level in Liechtenstein at the time because Bank X had bought the uncle of the Prince."

Her testimony was published in February 2001 as part of the French National Assembly report and was titled "The Obstacles to the Control and Repression of Financial Crime and Laundering in Europe," Vol. 3—Switzerland.

Predator of finance

The report described Switzerland as an "international predator of finance." It dealt briefly with Liechtenstein and the testimony of Madame Z, according to an executive summary prepared by David Chaikin, Australian lawyer and anti-money laundering expert who had studied the flow of Marcos funds. Chaikin was also the former senior fraud officer at the Commonwealth Secretariat, a London-based diplomatic body.

The executive summary was sent to Romulo in Malacañang.

A month after the French National Assembly report came out, Prince Constantin died. The cause of death was not given in the official announcement in Liechtenstein.

Corporate records in Liechtenstein showed that the late Prince Constantin was named director of Limag AG in February 1987.

There is scant information, however, on the work history of the late Prince Constantin. Prince Constantin was a cousin of Prince Hans Adam II's father, Prince Franz Josef II who ruled Liechtenstein until his death in 1989.

Prince Constantin was born in Vienna and lived in Liechtenstein from 1945 until his death in 2001.

Swiss corporate records showed that Prince Constantin was also a director of a Swiss portfolio management company called S.T.S. Salman Trust AG, which has offices in Zurich and Vaduz, together with Patrick Hilti (president of the Liechtenstein Banking Commission), Alfons Thony, Georg Huber, and Dr. Mario Zindel.

Zindel was the partner of Engelbert Schreiber, the liquidator of the Sandy Anstalt accounts of Irene Marcos Araneta at the Union Bank of Switzerland, according to Chaikin.

Sandy Anstalt was collapsed after liquidation on April 30, 1999 by Schreiber.

S.T.A. Salman Trust AG was deregistered on Oct. 15, 1993 but "an entity with exactly the same name operates with Patrick Hilti, Alfons Thony, Freddy Vogt, Georg Kesselstat and Hans Brunart as directors," Chaikin said in the executive summary submitted to Malacañang.

Prime minister

"Prince Constantin's connection to Hans Brunhart is important because Hans Brunhart was prime minister of Liechtenstein in 1986 when the Philippine government requested the freezing of the Marcos family assets," the executive summary said.

"Indeed, Brunhart was prime minister from 1978 to 1993, and is currently chair of Verwaltungs-und-Privat Bank," Chaikin wrote to Romulo.

Verwaltungs-und-Privat Bank is one of the banks to which the Sandy Anstalt funds or the Irene Araneta deposits had been transferred, based on the investigation of Australian investigator Reiner Jacobi who was contracted by the Presidential Commission on Good Government in 1988 to trace hidden Marcos loot.

Family fortune

In 1999, a survey of the wealth of Europe's 10 reigning dynasties by Eurobusiness magazine estimated the fortune of the royal family of Liechtenstein at £3.3 billion or approximately $5.5 billion.

The wealth of the Liechtenstein royal family comes from real estate, financial services and works of art.

The Liechtenstein royal family owns the largest financial services conglomerate in Liechtenstein, the Liechtenstein Global Trust Group. The LGT Bank is owned by the Liechtenstein Global Trust Ltd., Vaduz whose majority shareholder is the Liechtenstein royal family. The Liechtenstein's royal family's interest is through Liechtenstein Foundation, the vehicle of Prince Franz Josef II. ***(The story, "Madame Z stood up to powerful," should have been marked "Second of a series."—Ed.)***

Salonga: Partial answers to a mystery

Editor's Note: The following is the complete text of the Kilosbayan press statement.

THE REPORT that $400 million was "transferred secretly" before the Swiss Banking Commission could order a freeze on all Marcos accounts in Swiss banks in the evening of March 24, 1986, is credible, declared former Senate President Jovito R. Salonga, the first PCGG Chair and now the President of Kilosbayan. In fact, said Salonga, the correct amount is at least $800 million deposited in foreign banks.

The former Senate President, who published the book, "Presidential Plunder," in June 2000, said that Mrs. Imelda Marcos made a very interesting admission on or around March 26, 1998 in her interview with the Associated Press and Agence France Presse, which was published in the major local dailies on March 27, 1998. In that interview, the former First Lady revealed that "there is more money that the government is not yet aware of, but for the time being, I can admit that there is only $800 million in various international banks."

What is surprising, Salonga said, is that neither the PCGG Commissioners at the time the revelation was made in March 1998 (under president Ramos) nor the new PCGG Commissioners during the incumbency of former President Joseph Estrada, did anything to hold her accountable for that incriminating admission. In fact, PCGG Chairman Felix de Guzman, who was appointed to lead the PCGG immediately after Estrada assumed office in June 1998, declared that "the PCGG would not be adversarial this time," expressing his desire to enter into a compromise settlement with the Marcoses, with the hope that the Marcoses would have a "reciprocal attitude" and agree "to settle to abbreviate proceedings." I could not understand at the time why the PCGG Chair was acting like a beggar, pleading for a chance to enter into a compromise settlement with persons who had been secretly depositing and concealing our people's wealth in Swiss and other foreign banks.

Both the PCGG and the BIR could have run after Mrs. Marcos, considering that the Supreme Court declared "with finality" on March 1, 1999 that the Marcos estate was liable for deficiency income and inheritance taxes in the amount of P23.5 billion. The amount, which has not been paid since 1993, should add up to an enormous liability today, considering the accumulated interest. I am glad Executive Secretary Romulo and PCGG Chair Yorac are now in charge. It's time our people get justice and good governance, said the first PCGG Chair.

Salonga said that after Edsa I and their appointment by President Cory Aquino, he and former PCGG Commissioner (later Chief Justice) Pedro L. Yap went to the United States on March 12, 1986 in order (1) to get hold of the Marcos documents brought by the Marcos family to Honolulu; (2) testify in New York regarding the four Marcos buildings in Manhattan and the Lindenmere estate on Long Island; and (3) lay the basis for our Government's claim to the Marcos Swiss deposits in Switzerland. While he (Salonga) was testifying by deposition in New York, Commissioner Yap flew to Switzerland on March 25, 1986 to confer with Swiss authorities, but when he alighted from the plane in Geneva, he was informed by our Philippine Embassy officials who net him that the Bundesrat (the seven-member Cabinet) and the Federal Council had just ordered an unprecedented freeze on "all assets in Switzerland by Ferdinand Marcos, his family, and persons close to him, as authorized by Article 102.8 of the Swiss Constitution."

The unanswered mystery during our time, said Salonga, was "what the Marcoses were able to do with their Swiss deposits after their hurried flight from Malacañang on the evening of Feb. 25, their arrival in Hawaii on Feb. 26, 1986 and before the Swiss freeze order of March 24, 1986—a period of almost one month. That had been a big mystery to the PCGG, except for the Marcoses and their trustees, their lawyers, and confederates in Switzerland and Hawaii." But Mrs. Marcos' revelation on March 26, 1998 and the new report on the $400 million loot are "partial answers to the mystery," Salonga added.

Solons work out sharing scheme . . .

From page A1

panel composed of 11 congressmen and Public Works Undersecretary Teodoro Encarnacion.

'More equitable'

Andaya said the proposed system was the "more equitable way" of sharing the P34.8-billion public works budget of the DPWH for next year.

It is actually a modification of the controversial proposal made earlier by Surigao del Sur Rep. Prospero Pichay Jr. to maintain the status quo and tap an "equalization fund" from other departments with public works components.

Pichay had proposed that some P3 billion from the Departments of Agriculture and of Agrarian Reform be tapped as equalization fund for the districts disadvantaged by the present sharing formula. Both Agriculture Secretary Leonardo Montemayor and Agrarian Reform Secretary Hernani Braganza had objected to his proposal.

JOAN BONDOC

HOGGING the limelight in only the latest tussle over the long-running saga of the pork barrel for the House are two of its members, Representatives Prospero Pichay and Rolando Andaya.

Andaya said the compromise agreement ruled out the tapping of public works funds from departments other than the DPWH.

But Pichay said: "I am happy because my proposal for an equalization fund was adopted by my colleagues."

He also said Andaya had been given blanket authority to source the equalization fund *vis a vis* the various districts.

Pichay and Andaya had earlier exchanged words over Pichay's proposal, but according to Leyte Rep. Ted Failon, the meeting yesterday was "very cordial."

"They were already sweet when I arrived," he said.

Acceptable

Failon, a member of the panel who has been advocating a change in the present sharing system, voiced no objection to the proposed formula.

"That is acceptable because my case will be addressed," he said. "This will entail a little sacrifice from other districts in favor of deprived districts. This is the win-win formula."

Andaya said he was confident that members of the House committees on appropriations and on public works would accept the proposed formula when they meet this week to finalize matters.

ROMULO TO PLAY KEY ROLE

Gloria, Roco meet today on Palaro fate

By Marc Anthony Reyes

PRESIDENT Arroyo sits down with Education Secretary Raul Roco today in Malacañang to decide whether or not to push through with the 2002 Palarong Pambansa.

Executive Secretary Alberto Romulo is also expected to attend the meeting to present all the points raised by pro-Palaro officials during their earlier meeting last week.

Philippine Sports Commission chair Eric Buhain yesterday said he was confident Roco would reconsider his earlier decision to scrap the Palaro.

Although the PSC calls the shots in staging the Palaro following the implementation of Executive Order 81 (transferring all the functions of the DepEd related to sports to the PSC), it is the regional directors who supervise the training and development of the athletes-students through the PE instructors.

Buhain, Rep. Monico Puentevella and Naga City Mayor Jessie Robredo told Romulo last week they were ready to stage the Palaro in Naga starting June 3.

Puentevella told Romulo that 15 of the 16 regional directors have already submitted their entries for the Games slated June 3-10.

"Everyone is waiting for Malacañang's decision, especially the athletes," said Buhain. "We are crossing our fingers that the decision would be favorable to everybody, particularly the athletes."

Roco did not attend last week's meeting because he flew to Shanghai. He was set to return yesterday.

The DepEd earlier cancelled the Games upon the recommendation of the DepEd's management committee after the PSC failed to come up with the promised P36 million fund on May 3. The PSC got the money on May 6.

SPORTSWATCH

$wim festival at St. Benedict

A NUMBER of provincial swimming teams have registered for the 2nd Ceelin Swimming Festival on May 18-19 at the St. Benedict College pool in Alabang Hills, Muntinlupa. Leading the cast of provincial teams are the Aquarius Swimming Club of Iloilo City, YMCA of Olongapo, Metro Dagupan Swimming Club in Pangasinan, and the Lake City Swimming Club of San Pablo City in Laguna. With the postponement of the Palarong Pambansa to January next year, more province-based clubs and individual swimmers are expected to beat the May 11 registration deadline. Registration is going on and interested parties may go to Acie Square, 9532 Acie Street in San Antonio Village in Makati or call 8991897. Registration can also be made through telefax no. 8991933. The event has been endorsed by PSC Chair Eric Buhain, who has been invited as a special guest at the opening of the Ceelin swimfest.

Ferrari outclasses Jopia

DINO Ferrari outclassed Cebuano Julianito Jopia, 6-2, 6-1, and Joseph Arcilla defeated E.A. Diez, 6-2, 6-2, yesterday in the boys' 18-under division of the Head-Penn Metro Age Group Championships at the new Rizal Racket Club in Pasig City. Cebu-based Dumoran brothers Oswaldo and James scored contrasting victories to gain second round berths in this Group 1 event supported by Chris Sports and Dynamic Sports. Oswaldo outplayed Hamza Macapendeg, 7-5, 6-2, while Jems demolished Chris Fitz, 6-0, 6-0. Other first-round winners were Bacolod's Yannick Guba over Jesus dela Cruz, 6-1, 6-3; Chiang Kai Shek's Arithmetico Lim over Jacob Gil, 6-1,6-4; and Aklan's Mauric Lao over Andrew Adaza, 6-1, 6-4. In the boys' 14-under class, Leyan Moncera downed Ramil Sumipo, 6-4, 6-2, to advance in the next round.

Nat'l fishing draws big field

FIFTY-TWO anglers have signed up for the four-day Triple V 45th national fishing championship at the Don Andres Soriano Jr. Sportsfishing Camp in San Vicente, Sta. Ana, Cagayan on May 22-25. Triple V Group head Victor V. Villavicencio is the event's main supporter. "It's the biggest field in 45 years of PGFF Nationals," Philippine Game Fishing Foundation president Rey Buencamino said yesterday. Participants are tournament director Capt. Ben Solis, Jaime Ma. Flores, Mayenn Ordoveza, Rico Gueco, actor Richard Gomez, Mark Rosales, Danny Olanosa, Efren Chua Yap, Lito Tanseco, Bo Villanueva, Ignacio Locsin, Diding Gamboa, Noel Abello, Henry Ordinanza, Tony Tycangco, Bert Lingayo, Jimmy Briones, Crispin Saez, Ferdie Layson, Bobby Garcia, Conrad Cuesta, Benjie Toda, Jess Bartolome St., Jess Bartolome Jr., Jojo Joson, Edwin Fernandez, Tony Espejo, Lito Macapinlac, Noni Capili, Mar Paras, Raul Blay, Henry Teh, Edwin Gozman, Chito Clemente, Boy Co, Robert Ohan, Manny Lim, Mel Morales, Bert Azaña, Alex Ngo and his son Matthew Lester, Orly Palomar and his son Edwin, Roberto de los Reyes, Earl Hamilton, Noel Flores, Nelson "Tiger" Agustin and eight anglers from Bacolod City. For details, contact Rose Aberin of PGFF at tels. 373-0743/373-0248, e-mail: pgffrose@edsamail.com.ph or visit the Web site http://www.pgff.com.ph.

Agassi finally pockets Rome tilt

AGASSI

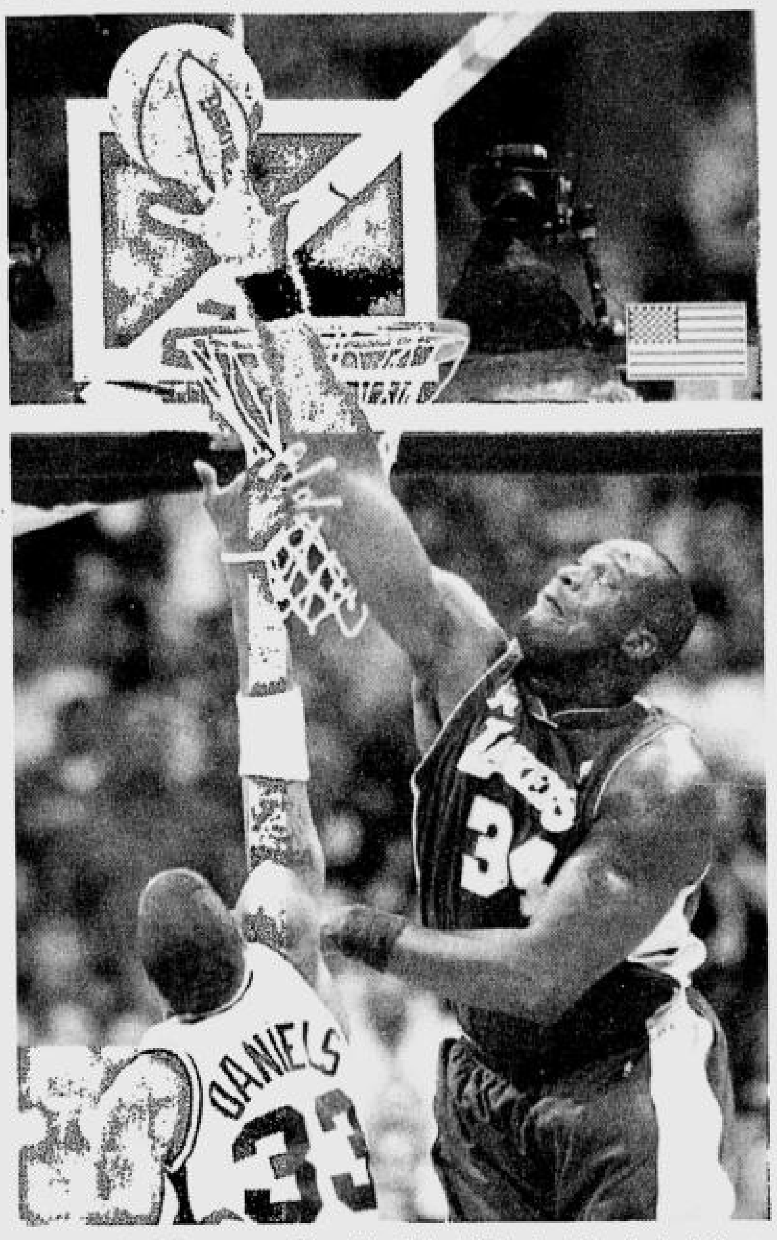
ROME —He first came to Rome 15 years ago—but this time Andre Agassi has finally conquered one of the few tournaments missing from his remarkable winning record. He finally won on Sunday the $2.7-M Rome Tennis Master Series, defeating Germany's Tommy Haas 6-3, 6-3, 6-0. "I just thought it wasn't a surface tennis should be played on, to be quite honest," he said. The 32-year-old American's victory came after previous eight attempts - including a loss in the 1989 final when he squandered a championship point against Argentine Alberto Mancini. "It's something you don't really admit to yourself because it's pretty much a disappointment when you came so close," Agassi said of his desire to win in Rome. "But you realize, as you size up all these tournaments outside the Grand Slams, that this has as much, if not probably more history, than all of them," Agassi said of the event, which was first played in 1930. In Berlin, Belgian teenager Justine Henin finally dug out the clutch shot she needed Sunday to get past one of the Williams sisters. The eighth-ranked Henin needed three match points before winning the $1.22 million German Open with a wild 6-2, 1-6, 7-6 (5) cliffhanger against Serena Williams. At 5-5 in the tiebreaker, the 19-year-old turned the American's powerful forehand into an unreachable drop shot that decided the match. "Maybe it was a breakthrough–I've always been too nervous in these kind of matches," Henin said. "But I played free in the head."

Salud co-hosts Ucap derby tonight

THE "12TH Ucap 7-Cock Derby" blasts off today and on Thursday at the Mandaluyong Coliseum, with lawyer Rudy Salud, Lito Orillaza and Boy de Roca as hosts and Sagupaan Super Feeds and Washout Shampoo of Lakpue Drug as sponsors. Today's participants, aside from the regular Ucap members, are Pepito Ngo, Mayor Jessie Viceo, Japanese cocker Riyoichi Saito, engineer Boy Garcia, Dante Eustaquio, ESM Ruel, Cesar Guce, Councilor Ferdie Eusebio, Happy Gamefarms, among others. The two-day cockfest is a prelude to the much-awaited "2002 Mandaluyong International 9-Cock Derby" second leg on June 4, 6 and 8 to be hosted by OPMI president Vic Yu and veteran pitmaster Ramon Mansenares. Meanwhile, the Ucap Matchmaker 4-Cock Derby is all set at the Mandaluyong Coliseum on May 18, with longtime partners Goody Lamboloto and Ariel Garovillo as hosts. For inquiries, call 534-4110, 531-4003, 531-4005 and 535-2341.

Father Johnny Go golfest stakes P2M

SOME P2 million worth of prizes will be up for grabs in the First Father Johnny Go Golf Cup to be staged by the Xavier School Alumni Association on May 31 at the Tagaytay Midlands in Tagaytay City. Held in honor of the school director, the 18-hole charity event will raise funds for Xavier School's grant-in-aid, or scholarship program, according to vice president for Fellowship Samson Lim. Lim, who chairs the organizing committee, said a car each from Ford Balintawak and Nissan Philippines will be at stake as hole-in-one prizes. The major sponsors include Xavier Class of '67, Class of '76, Batch '83, Belle Resources, Absolute Distilled Water, Naia Terminal 3 Piatco, Alaxan, Enervon Multivitamins, and Decolgen-Unilab. Other minor sponsors include Starwood Industries Corp., Paramount Vinyl Products Corp., Canada Hardware-Electroweld, and Global Network Advertising Co. Ltd. For other details, call 727-3329.



LOS Angeles Lakers center Shaquille O'Neal (34) rejects San Antonio Spurs guard Antonio Daniels (33) during Game 4 yesterday of their Western Conference playoff in San Antonio, Texas. The Lakers won, 87-85. AP

Bryant stars as Lakers win

SAN ANTONIO, Texas—Kobe Bryant scored 12 of his 28 points in the final period, including a pair of key 3-pointers and a go-ahead putback with five seconds remaining, as Los Angeles beat San Antonio, 87-85, in the NBA Western Conference.

San Antonio did not make a field goal after Bruce Bowen hit a 3-pointer with 6:56 left. Tim Duncan made two free throws with 6:15 left, but the Spurs managed a grand total of one point over the remainder of the game.

Fittingly, the Spurs ended things in inept fashion as Terry Porter fell down after receiving an inbounds pass with 3.2 seconds left, then got the ball to Duncan for an airball from 20 feet (six meters).

The Lakers have won a record 11 straight playoff games on the road, and this victory gave them a 3-1 advantage in the best-of-seven series. Game 5 will be played at Los Angeles on Tuesday (Wednesday in Manila).

In other games, New Jersey defeated Charlotte, 89-79, Boston routed Detroit, 90-79, as both teams joined Los Angeles to a decisive 3-1 edge in their best-of-seven playoffs. **AP**

Bear Brand Kitefest ends in smashing success

THE 12TH Annual Bear Brand Kitefest ended in smashing success on Sunday after a spectacular display of kites of varied shapes, sizes and colors in the skies over Quirino Grandstand at Rizal Park in Manila.

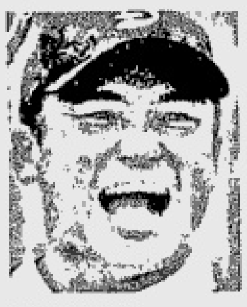
One of the most-awaited highlights of summer in Metro Manila, the Bear Brand Kitefest is the biggest and longest running kite-flying competition in the country.

Building a tradition of promoting family togetherness since its launch in 1991, the event has attracted a record number of contestants and spectators from all over the archipelago.

The Bear Brand Kitefest brought together the country's kite enthusiasts in friendly competition, giving them opportunities to showcase their creativity and ingenuity in designing kites that are visually attractive and aerodynamically sound.

This year's Bear Brand Kitefest involved a total of 10 legs in key cities nationwide. The previous nine legs thrilled spectators with the sights of this ancient sport in Dumaguete, Cabanatuan, Tacloban, Naga, Puerto Princesa, Davao, Baguio, Cagayan de Oro and Kalibo before it held the grand finals in Manila to an unprecedented display of creativity and imagination never before seen hereabouts.

Maruyama survives Tiger charge, tops Nelson Classic



MARUYAMA

IRVING, Texas—Shigeki Maruyama survived another Sunday charge by Tiger Woods and an unlikely one by rookie Ben Crane to win the Byron Nelson Classic, the second straight week an Asian has won on the PGA Tour.

Maruyama had to rely on a clutch short game, three times saving par on the back nine after leaving himself difficult chips. Another time, the Japanese star had to get up-and-down from the edge of the water on No. 11 just to make bogey.

He was all smiles at the end of a cloudy afternoon, however, closing with a 2-under 68 for a two-stroke victory over Crane.

"There's so many good players," he said. "In a way, I was under so much pressure." Maruyama, sticking out his tongue in mock relief after each of his great escapes, thrust his arms in the air when he finished and bowed before tournament host Byron Nelson.

A week after K.J. Choi became the first South Korean winner in tour history at New Orleans, Maruyama finished at 14-under 266 and became the first Asian with multiple tour victories. He also won last year in the Greater Milwaukee Open to become the first Japanese player to win on the mainland. This victory was much more impressive, coming against a field that boasted eight of the top 10 players. He earned $864,000, and a free pass into the US Open. **AP**

Sorenstam prevails

FRANKLIN, Tennessee—Annika Sorenstam matched the course record with an 8-under 64 Sunday and won the Aerus Electrolux USA Championship when Pat Hurst hit into the water and bogeyed No. 18. The finish was similar to The Office Depot a year ago, when Sorenstam overcame an LPGA-record 10-stroke deficit to beat Hurst. In that event, Hurst missed a playoff after hitting into a bunker on the final hole. **AP**

It's Cabrera

SUTTON COLDFIELD, England—Angel Cabrera of Argentina broke out of a tight battle on the back nine with a birdie at the 17th hole at The Belfry Sunday to win the Benson and Hedges International by one stroke. **AP**

Ambassador's Cup 2002 Tennis Tournament

LIBYA – The Association of Pinoy Tennis Players-Tripoli (APTP-Tripoli) won the Championship at the recently concluded Ambassador's Cup 2002 Tennis Tournament in Libya against APTP-Misurata. This is being held monthly through the support of the Philippine Embassy and OWWA Chapter in Libya. APTP aims not only to enhance physical aspects but also to promote camaraderie among Filipino OCW's in Libya. Included in the photo are Hon. Ambassador and Mrs. Mukhthar Muallam of the Philippine Embassy, their President, Mr. Joey Mallonga and Mr. Abner Mercado of ABS-CBN's *"The Correspondents"*.

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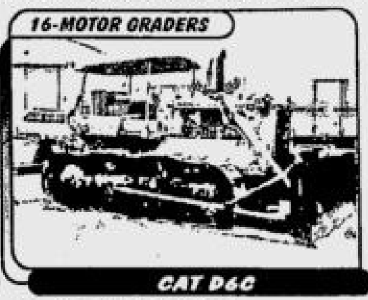

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SPORTS

Editor **Al S. Mendoza** ● Assistant Editor **Edwin M. Villanueva**

PBA FINALS

Alaska eyes 2-0 lead

GAME TODAY *(Araneta Coliseum)*
6:30 p.m.—Alaska vs Purefoods

Game 1—Alaska 79, Purefoods; 73

By June Navarro

ALASKA shoots for a 2-0 lead against Purefoods at the resumption of the PBA Samsung Governors Cup Finals today at the Araneta Coliseum.

The Aces gunned down the Hotdogs, 79-73, at the start of their championship fight on Sunday, gaining a crucial edge in the best-of-seven series.

Winning Game 1 entails a close shot at the title as majority of the teams which took the Finals' opener went on to capture the crown.

Seven of the last eight championships favored squads which stole Game 1 of their respective series since the 1999 PBA season.

Another benefit going for the Aces is the fact that the Hotdogs had lost Game 1 in their last three PBA Finals appearances with the crown slipping from their grasp each time.

That's besides from the last three championship meetings that the Hotdogs and the Aces had figured in where Alaska emerged triumphant in five games.

The Aces beat the Hotdogs, 4-1, in the 1996 All-Filipino Cup, 1997 Governors Cup and 2000 All-Filipino Cup, all done in dominating fashion.

Alaska coach Tim Cone, however, would rather pay attention to details than value bits of favorable history.

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Foundation University Kent Bulabon Isidro Bongcasan	Foundation University Cherie Mae Boladola Rolyn Marquicias
2nd Runners-up	
Mapua Institute of Technology Albert Alano Eliezer Collado	St. Jude College Angie Adorable Kriza Cabanog
3rd Runners-up	
PATTS College of Aeronautics Christian Pascual Robert Crisencio	Colegio de San Juan de Letran Sherrilyn Carrillio Cathlea Villaluz

Ateneo, Kutitap win

By Dennis U. Eroa

ATENEO-Hapee-Negros Navigation subdued Montaña Jewels in overtime, 71-65, and barge into the semifinals of the PBL Chairman's Cup yesterday at the Pasig Sports Center.

Kutitap Toothpaste wheeled itself back into contention for a semis slot as it snapped the five-game winning streak of Shark Energy Drink, 76-68, in the second game. Kutitap, which halted a three-game losing streak, climbed to a share of second place with Ana Freezers with 6-4 cards. Shark dropped to 5-5.

Playmaker Celino Cruz and slotman Enrico Villanueva delivered the telling blows as the Blue Eagles rallied from 13 points down in regulation to post their seventh win in 10 games, joining rival ICTSI-La Salle on top of the nine-team field.

Coach Joel Banal's charges trailed, 56-43, at the start of the fourth quarter. But Cruz and Villanueva boosted Ateneo's bid as they tirelessly put Montaña's defense under siege.

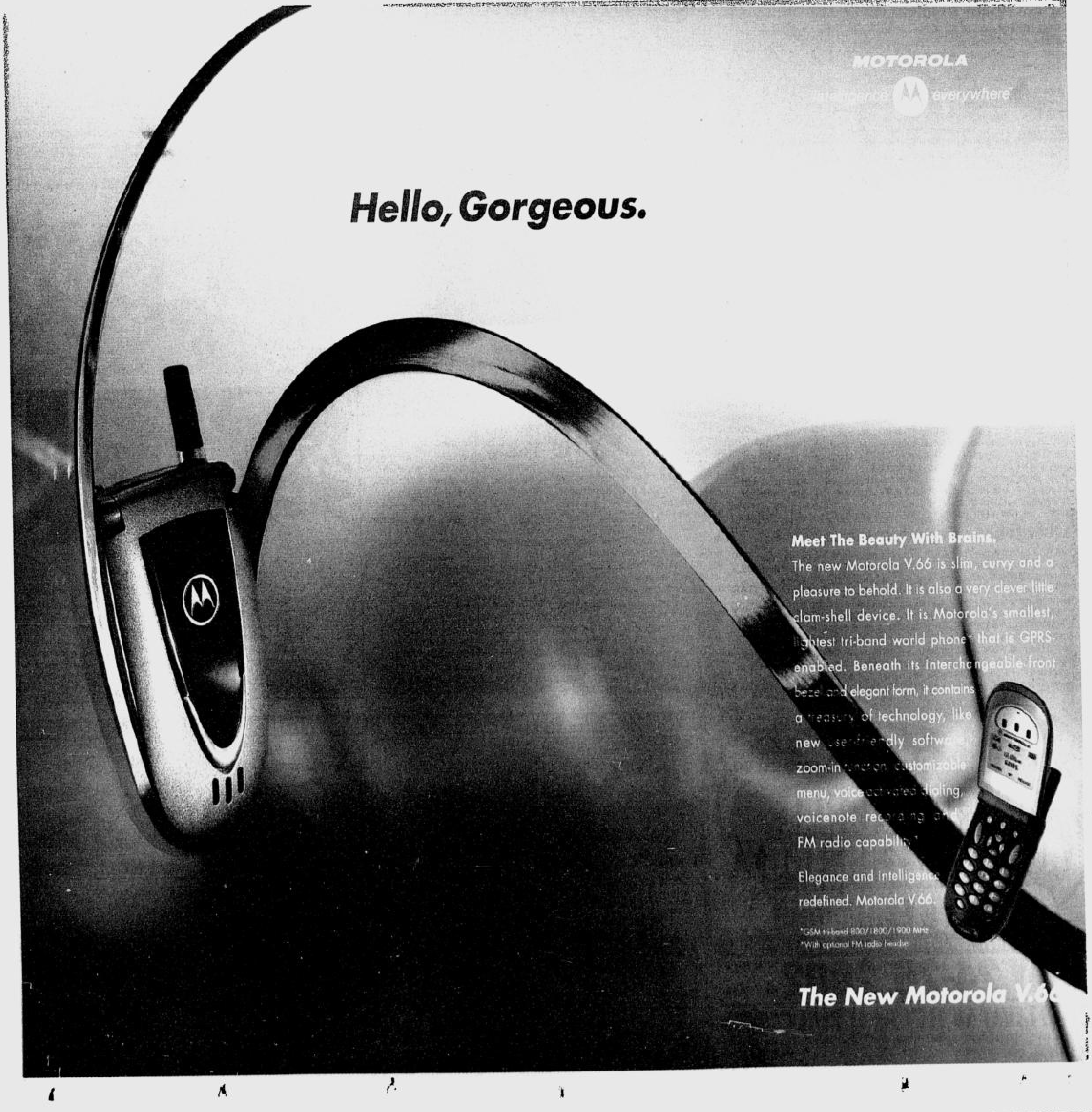
Montaña's bid to upend Ateneo suffered when the Jewels abandoned their slow-break game, opting to hurry up. Steve Marucot's difficult layup which forced the extension, 60-60, was Montaña's most shining moment in the fourth period.

Scores:

ATENEO 71—Cruz 21, Villanueva 18, Alvarez 6, Membrere 6, Anicete 5, Chia 4, Gonzales 4, Valdez 3, Fonacier 2, Quimpo 2, Domingo 0.

MONTAÑA 65—Mesina 20, Coronel 11, Alfad 9, Macapagal 8, Misola 5, Kalaw 5, Marucot 4, Salvacion 4.

Quarters: 27-18, 40-32, 55-43, 60-60 (OT), 71-65.



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Dead after Mother's Day /A22
11 arrested in Caloocan buy-bust /A22

METRO
Editor Louie C. Camino

Authorities take stock of shabu in NBI vault /A22

8 babies die at Baseco evacuation center

By Jerome Aning

AT LEAST eight infants from 500 families left homeless by the Easter Sunday fire at Baseco compound in Tondo, Manila have died allegedly due to the squalid conditions in a warehouse and a basketball court where they are housed, according to an urban poor group.

The Urban Poor Associates identified the dead infants as Gabriela Cabugnason, 4 months old; Janeses Orate, 5 months, Cherry Ann Libot, 8 months; Richard Samson, 7 months; Edzel Lumawag, 1 month; Kate Hangkan, 3 months; Marimar Orlanda, year-old; and 4-year-old Fe Roga.

The UPA yesterday asked Manila Mayor Lito Atienza to help these families who are unable to leave the Movers Warehouse and the Barangay 649 basketball court because the fire had left them penniless.

News of the children's deaths came while Atienza is attending the United Nations special session on children in New York City. He is set to return to the country this week.

Most of the children died of measles with complications of pneumonia, said UPA.

In a press statement, the group said that measles, diarrhea and other diseases have struck the evacuees "due to absence of basic services" in the evacuation center.

"Clean water is scarce, garbage is everywhere, sanitation is absent and there is not enough electricity," the statement said.

Jeorgie Tenolete, president of the Kabalikat sa Pagpapaunlad ng Baseco Compound, said the families still at the evacuation area were former tenants of residents of Baseco Compound, who have since been given lots at the compound.

Malacañang and City Hall ordered the distribution of lots in the 52-hectare Baseco Compound to the residents, but the tenants were not given lots.

UPA assistant coordinator Ted Añana said all occupants in Baseco should have been beneficiaries of the land grant.

The remaining evacuees, who were tenants of the Baseco residents, have brought their plight to Atienza's attention but he only asked the homeowners to "adopt" the tenants and gave no guarantee for housing.

But the lots given to the residents only measured 15 square meters each, Tenolete said.

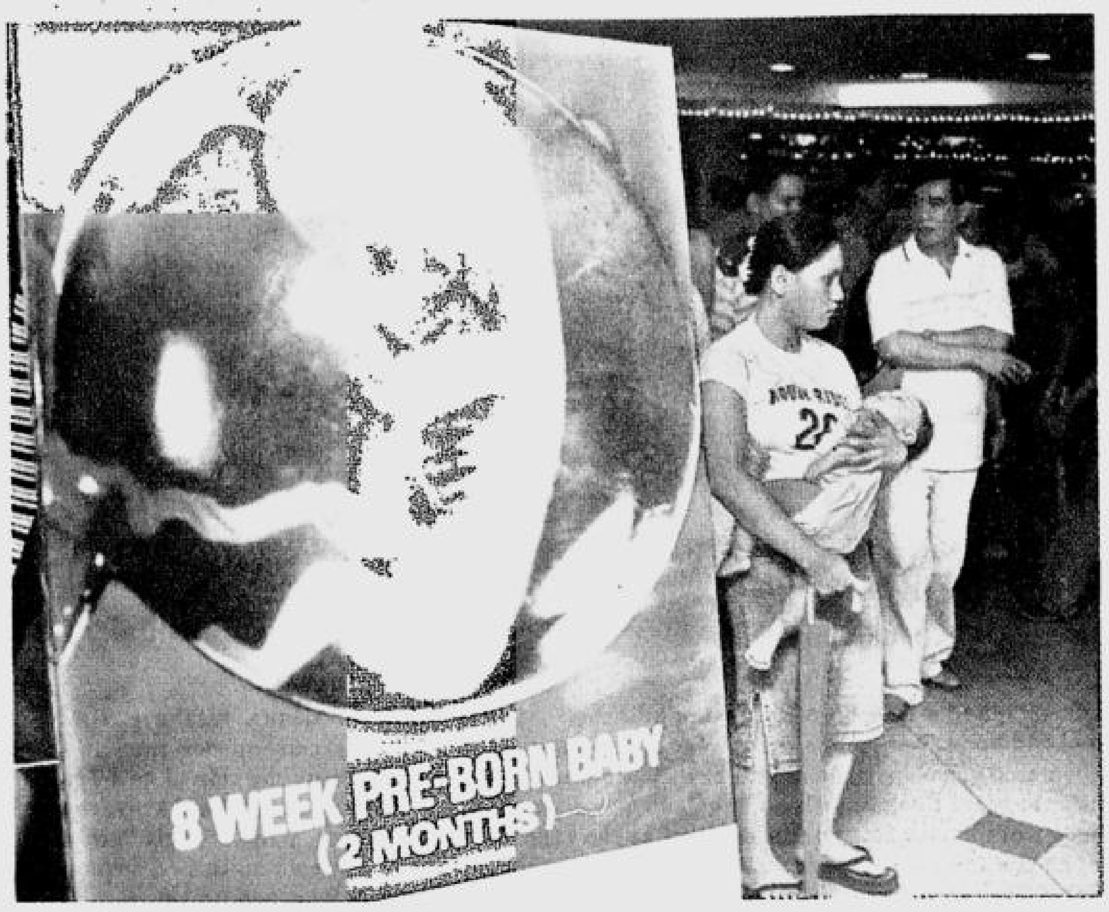
"This is clear discrimination," Aurelia Camangyan, one of the former tenants, said.

"Mayor Atienza is pushing us into extreme poverty," she said. "Why punish us when we are all equally entitled to a home of our own?"

"Where is Mayor Atienza's heart?" asked Amelia Orlanda, mother of one of the dead infants.

"We are left empty-handed by the fire. Now, he wants us to die in hunger and homelessness," she said between sobs.

Baseco, an area on the south bank at the mouth of the Pasig River, is home to 6,000 of the poorest families in the country.



LIFE AT 8 WEEKS
Like the sleeping baby in his mother's arms in crowded Lacson underpass in Quiapo, Manila, an unborn baby, as shown in this anti-abortion poster, is a living breathing human being at eight weeks.
RANDY HORMILLOSA

Employees accuse school of discrimination

By Christian V. Esguerra

EMPLOYEES of the International School Manila in Bel-Air, Makati yesterday staged a picket to protest the allegedly illegal dismissal of 50 non-teaching personnel.

Union officer Jewel Salvador yesterday accused the school management of discriminating against Filipino employees when it decided to terminate members of the classified staff due to the supposed redundancy of jobs.

The classified staff is composed of non-academic employees working in sections such as accounting and purchasing, she said.

The dismissed workers, accompanied by other sympathetic employees, trooped to the International School as early as 5 a.m. yesterday to urge school officials not to proceed with the dismissal, Salvador said.

School superintendent David Toze could not be reached at his office yesterday.

But a statement from the IS sent by fax to the INQUIRER said that the school has been guided by the labor laws in the Philippines.

"The economic environment has required the school to initiate a restructuring of its organization to remain competitive," the statement said. "An analysis of the school's operations has led to redundancies in the staff. The school's administration has offered generous early retirement packages to staff in positions that were affected by redundancies.

In a memorandum in January, the school management announced that it would dismiss 50 employees due to the repetition of jobs, according to the union officer.

Salvador said employees were given until Feb. 15 to choose between two early retirement packages offered by the school.

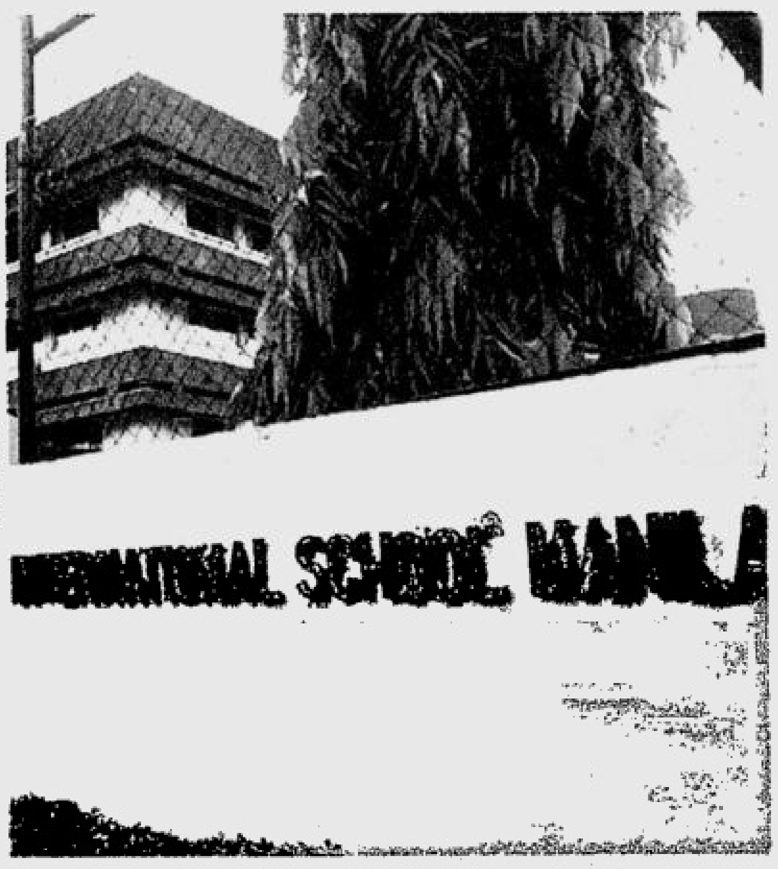
The first offer would give employees a separation benefit equivalent to US$300 multiplied with the total number of years they have spent with the school, she said.

The amount would then be added to the "normal retirement allocation," which varies depending on an employee's years of service, Salvador added.

The second option offered 150 percent of the normal retirement allocation, she said.

But the employees would not accept any of the offers, Salvador said. The IS statement said both management and the union have continuing discussions and communications "to arrive at a mutually satisfactory agreement."

The IS Board of Trustees has also decided to observe the "*status quo ante* to avoid further labor disputes with the union," the statement added.



IS caters mostly to children of expatriates.

MMDA tells kids to bring trash to class

By Christian V. Esguerra

WHEN the school year opens in June, students will not only bring books to school, but also bags of garbage.

The Metropolitan Manila Development Authority (MMDA) yesterday announced it would launch "Basura Baon sa Eskwela," a new program to help control the worsening garbage problem in the metropolis.

MMDA chair Benjamin Abalos Sr. said in a press conference that the program would encourage students, especially those from public schools, to collect recyclable materials and bring them to school in exchange for money.

"Through this, we can encourage students to do something about the garbage problem and at the same time help the poor raise even a small amount for their school needs," he said.

Abalos said the project would most likely be dismissed as "another gimmick" by environmental groups criticizing the MMDA for supposedly treating the Jancom issue with kid gloves.

"Environmentalists are telling me to resign...but how do I manage the garbage in Metro Manila?" he asked. "Please tell me. Please help me."

Abalos has been receiving heavy criticisms from environmental organizations and other cause-oriented groups after he decided to negotiate a compromise in the controversial Jancom garbage contract.

Even before the Supreme Court ruled with finality that the Jancom contract was valid and perfected, the garbage firm had already agreed to downscale its incineration technology to a landfill, according to Abalos.

He admitted that the government's recycling and segregation program through the use of materials recovery facilities is not enough to handle the tons of garbage produced daily in Metro Manila.

"We should be realistic," he said. "What do we do to garbage collected from *esteros*? Tell me if they can be recycled."

He said a "realistic" solution is the establishment of landfills and the implementation of projects such as the "Basura Baon sa Eskwela" program.

But however little the result of the project might be, Abalos said it would encourage students to do their part on the garbage crisis.

He said the MMDA would set up redemption centers at the entrance of schools where students may sell garbage.

Each material will have a corresponding amount. White papers and aluminum cans, for example, will be equivalent to P4 and P26 per kilo, respectively. Each bottle of soft drink will amount to P1.

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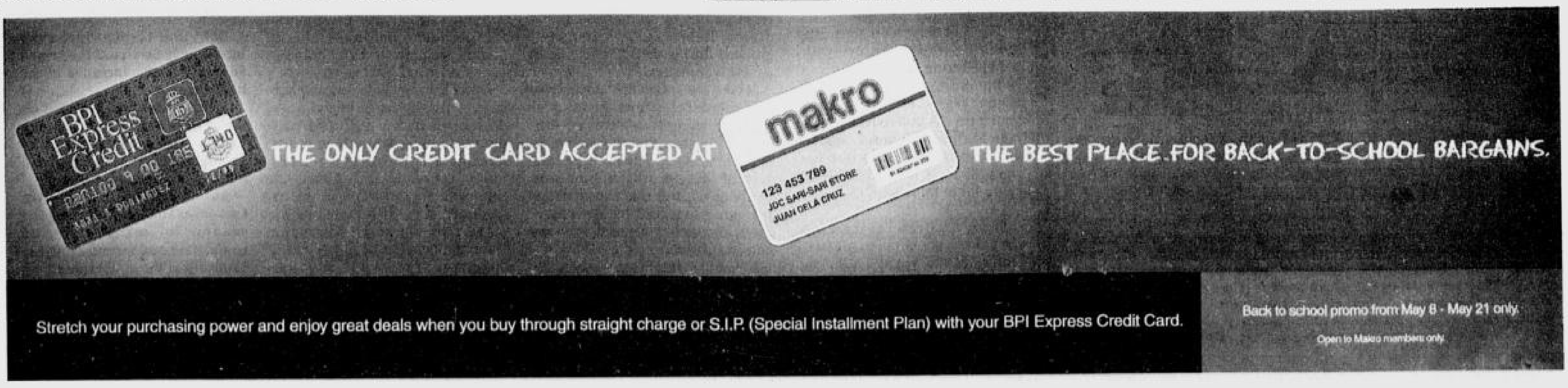
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Demolition pushes through at UP

By Agnes E. Donato

DESPITE the appeal of the Quezon City government, the University of the Philippines yesterday morning continued to demolish concrete houses of 35 families in a nearby community to construct a park.

Being an educational institution, the UP has asserted that it is "excluded" from existing housing and urban poor laws being an educational institution.

Joint forces of the UP Police and Central Police District, including members from the SWAT Team, initiated the demolition in Barangay San Vicente near the Visiting Information Center in Diliman at about 8 a.m. yesterday.

Most of the estimated 100 policemen who were deployed in the demolition site came without their nameplates. One even said that they did not wear their nameplates because they were working.

Earlier, at least five Quezon City councilors appealed the demolition through a letter sent to UP Vice Chancellor Gil Gotiangoc upon orders from Mayor Feliciano Belmonte.

In separate letters sent last week, the city officials asked UP to hold in abeyance the demolition until a suitable relocation site and other conditions acceptable to both parties have been reached.

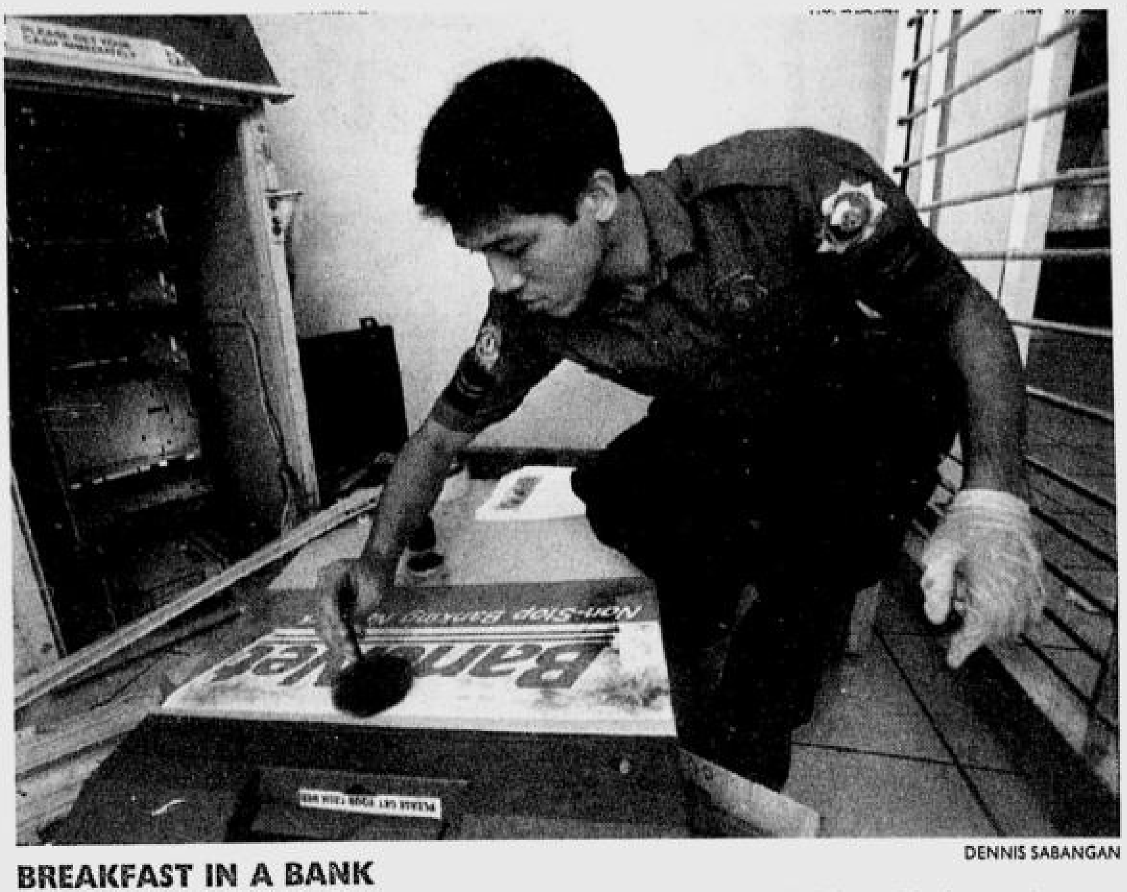
But in an interview with Gotiangco over the weekend, he said there was no more merit from reconsideration. He claimed that the issue has been going on since September 2001 and belied reports that there was no consultation with the affected residents. He said the demolished area would be turned into a park.

Gotiangco left for South Korea last week. He arrived last Friday and admitted having read the letters of appeal of the councilors at about noon the same day.

"When I got here I had to report to my superiors and in the afternoon I had to attend to meetings. I did not have time to reply to the letters," he said.

But in an 11th-hour move, Gotiangoc replied to the letters of appeal early yesterday morning, rejecting the request of the city councilors.

He also asked that no presidential memorandum previously issued, presidential decrees or declarations, and not even the Lina Law could be used against the claims of the UP "because this is an educational institution."



DENNIS SABANGAN

BREAKFAST IN A BANK

Robbers who hit four East-West Bank branches in Quezon City and Cainta, Rizal over the weekend had the time and the nerve to eat breakfast while they forcibly opened the automated teller machine of one branch. Police found breadcrumbs by the side of an ATM at the East-West Bank branch on Regalado in Fairview, QC. Police said the robbers knew that there were no security guards detailed at the branches on weekends. Bank officials have yet to determine the amount of money lost, but police said each ATM can hold up to P2.5 million in cash. PO2 Bernard Dustin is shown dusting for fingerprints at the Regalado branch.

Lawyer wants 2 slay witnesses put on immigration watchlist

By Christian V. Esguerra

THE FAMILY of slain private nurse Belma Abella has asked the Bureau of Immigration and Deportation to place on its watchlist two key witnesses in the murder case against socialite Marybeth Lopez de Leon.

In a letter to Commissioner Andrea Domingo, Abella family lawyer Melanio "Batas" Mauricio Jr. asked the bureau to prevent the possible departure from the country of witnesses Wensis Tablang and Conrado Erasca.

The Abellas were alarmed by reports that the 31-year-old Tablang has gone missing and might not be available to testify in the case to be filed in court against De Leon.

Tablang, who worked as the suspect's bodyguard and driver, made a sworn statement claiming he saw his employer leaving the wounded Abella inside her BMW sedan right after the shooting incident in front of BF International Village in Las Piñas last month.

He said De Leon, who was then carrying a Glock 9mm pistol, told him to come with her and leave the victim.

Erasca, a security guard, was detailed at the village entrance when the incident happened. He supposedly saw Tablang and De Leon grappling for the gun right after the shooting.

De Leon denied she shot Abella, who was the private nurse of her husband Jose Vicente Madrigal de Leon.

The Las Piñas prosecutor's office has yet to release its resolution on the murder charge against the suspect.

Dalizon, 70

ALEJANDRO U. Dalizon, father of People's Journal reporter Alfred Dalizon, died on May 12. He was 70.

His children, Ma. Elena and Jimmy, Julieta, Cristina, Joseph Vener, Alfred and Candy, Daniel and Ligaya, and Michael Dindo, grandchildren, great grandson and other relatives and friends request the readers to pray for the eternal repose of his soul.

His remains lie at the Nacional Memorial Homes on G. Araneta Avenue in Quezon City.

Interment will be on Thursday, May 16, at the Manila North Cemetery, after the 8 a.m. Mass at the Nacional Memorial Homes.

Dead after Mother's Day

By Philip Tubeza

A DAY after Mother's Day, Alicia Guadalupe, 25, woke up to find her 2-month-old boy dead in their pushcart parked on a busy intersection in Manila.

Guadalupe, a scavenger who lives with her family in a makeshift pushcart, said she found her Baby Marcon dead, with blood oozing from his nose, when she woke up early yesterday morning at the corner of Asuncion and Recto streets in Binondo, Manila, said detective Edison Bertoldo of the Western Police District homicide section.

The baby did not have a birth certificate, Bertoldo said.

Bertoldo quickly dismissed reports that Guadalupe rolled on top of her son while she was asleep, adding these were "mere rumors."

He said Baby Marcon could have died due to other reasons.

"It is possible that the baby was fed with something dirty, which might have caused infection," Bertoldo said.

He added the police would also no longer investigate the death because Guadalupe and husband Ferdinand are not interested in pursuing the case.

The couple also did not have their child autopsied.

Guadalupe and Ferdinand, both from Mindoro, and their three children, all sleep in the small pushcart. They earned their living by rummaging through the garbage on Binondo streets, Bertoldo said.

Authorities take stock of shabu in NBI vault

By Philip C. Tubeza

NATIONAL Bureau of Investigation officials and Pasay City court officers yesterday began the re-inventory and re-weighing of the stocks of shabu at the NBI headquarters.

Samuel Ong, NBI deputy director for Intelligence Services, told reporters that they expect the re-inventory to wind up tomorrow.

"This is a transparent process," Ong said. "There will be no whitewash here."

Last month, officers of the Dangerous Drugs Board and the Pasay City Regional Trial Court sheriff earlier discovered that 8.67 kilos of shabu contained in five plastic bags were missing from the NBI's evidence vault.

The missing shabu formed part of the 246.76 kilos that the NBI seized from a suspected drug dealer in Pasay on Dec. 26, 2000.

The missing bags were marked SC-28, SC-36, SC-49 and SC-50, which were placed in bag No. III, and SC-222, which was contained in bag No. XI.

Ong said the court officers and the members of the special NBI fact-finding committee would go through each bag of shabu inside the vault and weigh their contents.

Aside from the government officials, a representative of Volunteers Against Crime and Corruption was also present during the re-inventory at the NBI's Forensic Chemistry Division.

Ong said the NBI committee had taken the sworn statements of at least 14 persons, including the agents who handled the drugs case, the DBB, the sheriff's office, and employees of the NBI's Forensic Chemistry Division.

He added some Forensic Chemistry employees had taken the lie-detector test but he declined to reveal the results.

Besides Ong, the NBI fact-finding committee includes internal affairs division chief Lauro Reyes, Office of the Director staff Eric Quintos, intelligence services head Rustico Vigilia and legal division head Joseph Menzon.

11 arrested in Caloocan buy-bust

By Tina Santos

ELEVEN suspected drug pushers, including six Muslims and two women, were arrested in separate buy-busts early yesterday morning in Caloocan City.

Police identified the six Muslims as Hapid Dapat, 20, Samer Mayor, 18, Noel Santos, 30, Jovencio Soner, 48, Johnny Bugis, 17, and Dato Bandara, 17, all natives of Zamboanga and residents of Zabarte Road, Caloocan.

Caloocan Police Director Supt. Benjardi Mantele said the six were arrested in Calina Homes, Zabarte Road around 2 a.m. during an operation conducted by members of police sub-station 4 and the local drug enforcement unit.

The suspects fell in the police trap when they handed over sachets said to contain 150 grams of shabu to PO2 Hector Castillo who posed as the buyer, Mantele said.

The culprits were arrested as soon as they received P40,000 in marked money from the undercover lawman, police said.

In a separate operation, the Caloocan police arrested Nebri Tamayo, 34, Josephine de la Cruz, 34, Eduardo Lopez, 41, Alvin Madriadano, 25, and his wife Lourdes, 33.

Police seized shabu of undetermined quantity from the suspects.

Manila launches search for outstanding artists

THE CITY of Manila has launched its search for this year's recipients of the "Diwa ng Lahi at Patnubay ng Sining at Kalinangan" awards.

The awards were first given out in 1963 by then Mayor Antonio Villegas to give due recognition to skilled and dedicated Filipino artists.

Three major awards will be handed out: the highest is the Diwa ng Lahi Award, followed by the Gat Antonio Villegas Award, and the Patnubay ng Sining at Kalinangan Awards.

Deadline for submission of nominations is on May 15. Nominations may be submitted to the Manila Tourism and Cultural Affairs Bureau at Rm. 136 and 137 at the ground floor of the Manila City Hall.

For inquiries, please call 527-4084 and 527-5186.

THE DAILY GOSPEL

Tuesday, May 14, 2002
St. Matthias, Apostle

1st Reading: **Acts 1:15-17, 20-26**
Gospel: **Jn 15:9-17**

Jesus said to his disciples, "As the Father has loved me, so I have loved you; remain in my love. You will remain in my love if you keep my commandments, just as I have kept my Father's commandments and remain in his love.

I have told you all this, that my own joy may be in you and your joy may be complete. This is my commandment: love one another as I have loved you. There is no greater love than this, to give one's life for one's friends; and you are my friends if you do what I command you.

I shall not call you servants any more, because servants do not know what their master is about. Instead I have called you friends, since I have made known to you everything I learned from my Father.

You did not choose me; it was I who chose you and sent you to go and bear fruit, fruit that will last. And everything you ask the Father in my name, he will give you.

This is my command, that you love one another."

Commentary

The commandments of Jesus are a path to joy. "Commandment " sounds a rather cold and authoritarian word. Yet "Love one another as I have loved you"—though demanding, has nothing harsh about it. None of God's commandments are kill-joy. Quite the opposite. To love is to give our life for our friends, and this is what we do whenever we share time, talent or treasure without expectation of anything in return. Then the Spirit flows through us, and the fruit of the Spirit is joy. There are no master-servant relationships among us. We are friends not servants of Jesus. This is the beauty of Christianity—the transcendent God draws near to us. The God Jesus reveals is so unassuming and simple, laying down his life at every moment. As we realize God is so much more humble than we are, joy blossoms.

Claretian Publications Inc., 8 Mayumi St., UP Village, Diliman, Quezon City, UP P.O. Box 4, Diliman, 1101 Quezon City; Tel.: 921-3984; Fax: 921-7429; E-mail: claret@cn1.net; Websites: http://www.bible.claret.org (Claretian Publications Inc.) & http://missionaries.claret.org (Claretians in the Philippines)

SUPREME COURT DOCTRINES

LABOR LAW (LABOR RELATIONS LAW)—Determination of the existence of an employer-employee relationship—In determining the existence of an employer-employee relationship, the following elements are considered: (1) the selection and engagement of the worker or the power to hire; (2) the power to dismiss; (3) the payment of wages by whatever means; and (4) the power to control the worker's conduct, with the latter assuming primacy in the overall consideration. No particular form of proof is required to prove the existence of an employer-employee relationship. Any competent and relevant evidence may show the relationship. [Citations omitted.] [Justice Sandoval-Gutierrez, Perpetual Help Credit Cooperative, Inc. v, Faburada, G. R. No. 121948, October 8, 2001]

DIGEST BY R. B. VERA

Stupid government prosecutors

ON TARGET

Ramon Tulfo

OH, for crying out loud! The government lost its 15-year-old case against the Marcoses and their cronies in the Philippine Long Distance Telephone Co. for recovery of ill-gotten wealth because it used photocopied documents as evidence!

Government lawyers who handle the case should be disbarred or exposed for their stupidity.

***

But stupidity, for sure, is not the reason the government lost the case.

One wonders whether money changed hands between the respondents and the government prosecutors.

Almost always, justice in this country favors the rich.

***

The drug Ecstasy is fast overtaking shabu (methamphetamine hydrochloride) as the drug of choice of young people.

Why? Because it's a party drug, meaning, it's taken by young people during parties.

But Ecstasy is unlike marijuana, which is also taken by young people in convivial gatherings. Marijuana is mostly smoked and the smoke has a pungent smell. Ecstasy is concealable because it's in tablets.

***

Being a parent, I'm concerned about Ecstasy's popularity among teenagers and young adults and the effects on its users.

The letter below, which I am printing in full, was written by an expert on drugs and is himself a parent. It would be well for parents and their teenage children to read it thoroughly.

Dear Fellow Parents:

Being the director of the PNP Anti-Narcotics Group and a parent myself, it is my duty to inform you about the emergence of the "killer drug" Ecstasy. I am particularly worried about the fact that many Filipino parents are not familiar with the current party fad or the so-called "rave" scene wherein the latest versions of "illegal drugs" can be procured.

"Raves" are parties set up in different venues by promoters—in stadiums, fields, clubs, campuses, grounds during school fairs, and in vacant warehouses.

Raves are frequently advertised as alcohol-free events, giving parents a false sense of security. Promoters also hire security guards so that parties will appear safe, but most of these guards are not even aware of the fact that illegal drugs are being ingested by the party-goers, and there are guards who are simply tolerant.

In many cases, Ecstasy is sold for P1,000 to P1,200 per pill or tablet. Ecstasy is called the "hug drug" or "love potion" because it lowers the user's inhibition and makes him crave for physical contact and audio-visual stimulation. Hence, synthesized sounds or the so-called "trance music" and arrays of psychedelic lights dominate "rave parties."

My dear parents, the Dangerous Drugs Board (DDB) has determined that Ecstasy can cause permanent changes in the brain's chemistry.

Ecstasy can also cause severe dehydration and can raise a user's body temperature to as high as 108 degrees Fahrenheit. Some unscrupulous promoters cum dealers, looking to sell bottled water at exorbitant prices, deliberately turned the water supplies off at "rave venues, exacerbating the dangers for our unwary children.

Yet, many kids believe that Ecstasy is harmless. But in the United States and Europe, where the drug actually originated, Ecstasy has already resulted in thousands of overdoses that led to numerous deaths.

Parents should look for the warning signs of Ecstasy use by children—strange paraphernalia including pacifiers, Vick Vaporub, surgical masks and glow sticks.

Other signs include unusual habits such as the usage of dark eyeglasses even during nighttime, playing music in unbearably loud volume and irregular sleeping habits. And, of course, among the tell-tale signs is the big increase in the expenditure. It is costly to maintain.

There are lots of misinformation about the benefits of Ecstasy (amphetamine type stimulants), particularly on the Internet and most of the adventurous types of the Filipino youth have actively participated in the propagation of such misleading notions into facts. In this regard, I am imploring my fellow parents to become better educated about the indicators and signs of Ecstasy usage among their children.

Finally, I am inviting parents, whose children have already fallen into the clutches of the Ecstasy dealers, to get in touch with our office (tel. 724-87-88 or Patrol 117) and discuss with us the appropriate remedies and rehabilitation treatments.

Very truly yours,
(Signed)
Efren Q. Fernandez
Director, PNP Narcotics Group

***

Makati City Assistant Prosecutor Henry Salazar cannot be blamed for filing in court libel cases against this writer, two reporters, the publisher, and some editors at the Inquirer for the series of articles about Sen. Panfilo Lacson.

Col. Victor Corpus, chief of the Intelligence Service of the Armed Forces, was also included in the libel charges.

Salazar based his decision on the articles which, he said, were written "with malicious intent of impeaching the honesty, virtue and reputation of the complainant."

But if Salazar had known Lacson, as I have known the good senator for many years, he would have had second thoughts about filing those libel cases.

Thus saying, I won't say anything more lest more libel cases from the honorable senator come our way.

'Star Wars Episode II' fans camp out in L.A.

LOS ANGELES—Scores of die-hard fans of the blockbuster Star War series are camping out on Hollywood Boulevard to attend the opening of "Star Wars, Episode II" at the Chinese Theater.

Some 130 people whose names, date of arrival and time spent waiting are meticulously kept in a list, take turns between standing in line and resting in a makeshift campsite outside the famous moviehouse, atop the hand and foot prints of faded movie stars that adorn the sidewalk.

Billy, a 19-year-old local student and commercial graphic designer, works on his laptop at the campsite that has been his round-the-clock home since April 4.

"I'm only going home for Mother's Day," he said.

To secure a place in the ticket line that will form outside the Chinese Theater on May 14 (two days before the grand opening at midnight, May 16), people have to spend a minimum of 60 hours at the improvised tent city.

Some fans, like Billy, have clocked 600 hours so far. They do it for fun and for charity, since they all have to donate at least $50 to the Starlight Children Foundation.

"Some people think this gives us a justification to be here but we really don't need a justification," said Billy as he busily put together a laser sword wielded by the Jedi warriors.

Not far away, sitting on the sidewalk was Hellen, a 50-year-old mystery novel critic, and Maine artist Nathan, 30.

"We are very lucky to work on a freelance basis because lots of people just can't quit their work to stay here for over a month," said Hellen, who has been here every day, although she admits going home to sleep.

All three fans, however, already have tickets for the opening. They just hang around the camp for pleasure.

"It's fun to do. I did it three years ago and I liked it," said Nathan referring to Lucas' "Star Wars Episode I: The Phantom Menace." "Here we have a little community and a lot of friendship."

Passersby and reporters stop for a chat, and even the police officers on their regular patrols like to spend a few minutes talking with the fans.

They are all eagerly awaiting "Star Wars: Episode II—The Attack of the Clones," hoping it will make up for the disappointing 1999 Episode I.

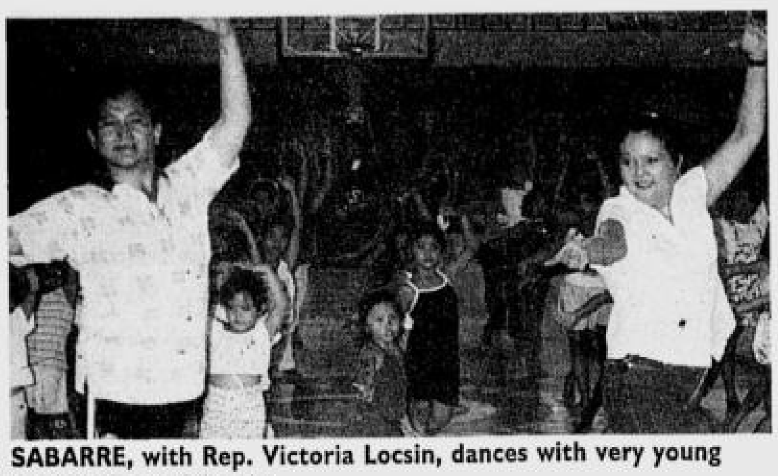
"I liked the Episode I because it was a beautiful movie, but I admit that it wasn't a good movie," said Billy.

"Now that I'm looking forward to Episode II, I think I like Episode I a little bit more," said Hellen. "I know it wasn't the best movie in the world but it's the movie that built up for what we are going to see now."

However, she felt some of the characters lacked depth. "I expect we will get to see more Jedis. I'm looking forward to seeing what Lucas wants to tells us about the Jedis."

The mythological warriors Lucas created for his first "Star Wars" in 1977 are one of the main attractions for thousands of fans worldwide who have been following the trilogy that continued with "The Empire Strikes Back," in 1980, and "The Return of the Jedi," in 1983.

The series developed a cult following around the world long before Lucas announced in 1999 that he was shooting the first of a new trilogy set in the years leading up to the original series. ***AFP***



SABARRE, with Rep. Victoria Locsin, dances with very young workshop participants.

Sabarre trains scholars

ODON Sabarre, artist-in-residence of Region VIII, is conducting summer dance workshops in Tacloban City and Ormoc City in Leyte, and Catbalogan in Samar.

Sabarre teaches ballet, jazz and interpretative dancing. He will also conduct dance scholarship programs, where he will select the 20 most talented students from each city and try to hone them to eventually become members of the dance company he is forming.

The 20 dance scholars will get free training, free leotards, tights and shoes, and an honorarium for their transportation expenses.

Leyte Gov. Remedios Petilla will sponsor the scholars from Tacloban, Rep. Victoria Locsin those from Ormoc, and Rep. Antonio Nachura those from Catbalogan.

Auditioning for Sabarre are some 400 dance students.

Renewed sense of hope

VIEW FINDER

Nestor U. Torre

KEANU Reeves takes a break from his usual heroic star turns by playing a down-and-out character in his latest movie, "Hardball." He is cast as a gambler being hunted down by bookies' goons for not paying his debts.

Clutching at any straw he sees, he agrees to coach a ragtag softball team made up of scruffy, streetwise boys from the black ghetto.

At first, Reeves dislikes the boys as much as they despise him. In time, however, he discovers that the boys have been so unloved that even the smallest act of kindness works wonders on their heretofore hardened, little hearts.

Reeves has his own share of problems, and the kids' growing gratitude and love for him help him get his act together, in turn.

The movie is sometimes too good to be true, but Reeves' painful process of change helps make these transformations easier to take.

Reeves provides the production with its thespic fulcrum, but the best thing in the movie is the ensemble work turned in by the child actors who play the members of the softball team whom Reeves has to turn into champions.

Unlike other child actors who try so hard to look cute and act innocent, the child actors here are a sassy, scrappy bunch of losers at the start of the film.

Only when Reeves gets through to them do they learn to play as one, and to care for each other, way beyond the goal of victory.

The film works well as an inspiring tale, but some viewers may have a hard time understanding the thickly-accented black jive that its young actors affect to be believable as kids from the wrong side of the tracks.

But the movie compensates for this aural difficulty with its depiction of the harshness and danger of life in the black urban ghetto. Viewers' hearts go out to these boys who have to run the gauntlet of thugs and goons plying their nefarious trades in the urban jungle.

Given this daunting context, we understand why the boys have become so tough, and appreciate even more Coach Reeves' efforts to give them a renewed sense of hope, liberation and love.

Chanteuses at Calesa Bar

THE HYATT Regency Manila's Calesa Music Bar & Lounge is famous for discovering some of the best and most durable chanteuses in the land, thanks to entertainment director **Rudy Francisco**'s knowing eye—and ear.

Now performing at the Calesa Bar are: (Mondays) **Marissa Sanchez**; (Tuesdays) **Sarah Vergel**; (Wednesdays) **Miriam Valmores**; (Thursdays) **Pam Umali**; (Fridays) **Rowena Michaels**; (Saturdays) **Kathleen** and **Arthur**.

Happy Hour starts at 6 p.m., while performances begin at 9 p.m.

Marissa Sanchez will have a special show on May 13, titled "Songs in the Key of C-omedy." Marissa's unique combination of lively singing and wacky comedy is her ticket to the top.

On May 30 at 6:30 p.m. Club at the Hyatt invites lovers of wines and cheeses to taste various combinations at the Balitaw Room. The wine and cheese-tasting affair is co-sponsored by Philippine Wine Merchants.

On Star World

THIS month, the Star World channel starts telecasting new seasons of "The Simpsons" (Sundays at 7 p.m.) and "Everybody Loves Raymond" (Mondays at 8:30 p.m.).

"The Simpsons'" well-loved albeit dysfunctional characters include Homer, Marge, Bart, Lisa and Maggie.

On "Everybody Loves Raymond," the title character is the head of a chaotic household who has to contend with a wife who's likely to crack from pressure at any moment, an intrusive mother, father and brother, a precocious five-year-old daughter, and messy infant twin sons.

'Double Trouble'

TWO of the country's most exciting bands, Rivermaya and Slapshock, team up for the first time in "Double Trouble—Akoustik Rampage" at 8 p.m. on Saturday, May 18 at Music Museum.

The event combines the smooth grooves of acoustics and high-voltage musical mayhem. Call 891-5610.

WAITING FOR THE CLONE WARS

A fan's vision of what it should be like

By Oliver M. Pulumbarit
Contributor

ACCORDING to a myth, devotees of the original Star Wars trilogy are predisposed to like whatever George Lucas is doing with the prequel trilogy.

Not entirely true, as old fans of the space opera had mixed thoughts about his "Episode I: The Phantom Menace" three years ago. Many jaded critics derided the not-so-good feeling of deja vu and the Disney-fication of some characters (Jar Jar Binks and Li'l Vader).

I assume it's a somewhat reflexive reaction for diehard fans of the original films: We all have our own visions of what a Star Wars film should be like. And when Lucas decided to slightly veer from what fixed ideas we had, well, many of us scoffed.

It's like a heretic new chapter was forced upon the fans, testing their faith in Lucas' talents. The boyband N'Sync even had a cameo in the new film, which made Star Wars-philes give in to anger and hate.

But much of that seems to have dissipated upon the release of the last trailer two months ago. "Episode II: Attack of the Clones" is due to open next week. This is the fifth in a series of six films, with a screenplay written by Lucas and Jonathan Hales.

This takes place 10 years after the events of "Phantom," decidedly a darker chapter than the last one.

I was a child when the first original films came out, which just blew me away. I imitated the light saber duels, and broke quite a few broken plastic rulers. Star Wars and comic books inspired me to imagine, to believe that anything is possible in the field of the arts. The experience of watching Star Wars films evokes a sense of awe, even after over two decades since seeing the first ones.

The Force

For the uninitiated, (all 10 of you), "Star Wars" is the saga of the Skywalker family, set within political struggles of galactic proportions. Immaculately impregnated by the Force, the energy that surrounds all living things, Shmi Skywalker bore Anakin, an intelligent boy who joins the peace-keeping Jedi Order to control his manifesting powers. He falls in love with Queen Amidala, an ally he met as a child.

Manipulated by the perennial Sith Lord Palpatine, Anakin betrays the Jedi and becomes a Sith himself, Darth Vader. Unbeknownst to him, his twin offspring Luke Skywalker and Leia Organa have been covertly drafted to the war to liberate the galaxy from Palpatine's Empire.

Luke successfully reaches into Vader's psyche, and as Anakin the latter destroys Palpatine at the cost of his own life. Leia, her ex-smuggler lover Han Solo and a number of Rebel allies defeat the reigning forces, ending the tyrannical rule that forced their family apart.

Bogus trailer

That's the epic tale in a nutshell, a cultural phenomenon that defined many moviegoers' taste for fantasy films. It's also a well-oiled merchandising machine, engulfing the globe with fast food tie-ups, action figures, and everything else imaginable.

So despite whatever's said of the previous installment, people will still flock to see "Attack of the Clones" (I watched "Phantom Menace" six times during the month-long run, because admittedly, it's visually appealing, and Darth Maul saved the movie).

> I was a child when the first original films came out, which just blew me away. I imitated the light saber duels, and broke quite a few broken plastic rulers

Almost two years ago, a fan made a bogus trailer for Episode II. This included spliced scenes from other movies (and TV shows) that starred Natalie Portman, Hayden Christensen, Jimmy Smits, Christopher Lee and a bunch of others. It featured a battle scene from "Braveheart" but the mystery director digitally changed their weapons to light sabers.

It piqued the collective interests of many fans, as rumors spread like wildfire regarding the next film's plot. The "Clone Wars" event was only tangentially mentioned in Episode IV, and it was Lucas himself who barred the writers of his Star Wars novels and comic books from writing about it. This meant he was cooking up something big for the remaining prequels, something that involves the decimation of the Jedi Knights.

PORTMAN

Everyone's waiting for a multitude of Jedi in action, which they didn't even get to see in the previous part. I was a bit disappointed when the Jedi didn't even give the fallen Qui-Gon a light saber salute.

Theories, scenarios

In any case, that interest made me come up with my own fan boy theories and scenarios regarding Episodes II and III. More than a few rumored actors' names popped up during casting, including Gillian Anderson's. She'd make a great Mon Mothma, the red-haired senator who created the Rebel Alliance. The character was briefly glimpsed in Episode VI.

Another unconfirmed actor was Gabriel Byrne, who would make an excellent Grand Moff Tarkin, a feared Imperial officer (played by Peter Cushing in the original flick).

It has also been speculated for many years that the Millennium Falcon (Han Solo's ship) was actually a former Jedi vessel. It would be interesting and sweetly ironic if Lucas revealed that Anakin created it, as he did C-3PO, unwittingly supplying the Alliance with weapons that would lead to the Empire's downfall.

There has also been a foreboding assumption that Anakin's mother Shmi will be killed by Palpatine, framing the Jedi for the crime. There's a huge likelihood that it'll happen.

To make Anakin's transformation into Vader more complicated, the creation of a femme fatale Sith witch who would tempt him to go to the Dark Side has possibilities (this character can be offed by Vader himself). It can create serious implications with his relationship with Amidala. An eventual light saber duel pitting him against Obi-Wan and Amidala will also prove bittersweet.

Illicit romance

It'd be spectacular if the Clone Wars involved clones of all the deceased Sith Lords, because it could show a visually stunning battle scene with the Jedi. During this fateful conflict it would be funny if Palpatine electrocuted Yoda (since he's eluded detection for so many years). We'll see.

From what can be surmised from the four trailers for "Attack . . ." (and the Corn Flakes cereal boxes), Palpatine tries to end the ages-old conflict between the Sith and the Jedi by creating a Clone Trooper army through Jango Fett (Boba's dad).

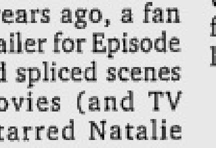
A blossoming illicit romance between Amidala and Anakin brings forth ominous changes, and a rogue Jedi, Count Dooku, engages Obi-Wan and Anakin in light saber combat.

It's best to leave the high expectations at the door, if that's possible at all, and not hold our breath for anything that we want to see. But if there are holes in the latest installment, count on the devotees to explain the imperfections with enthusiasm and speculative excuses.

And let's hope that young Boba Fett doesn't go "Yipee!!!" like the Vader tyke did. We'll see next week.

Ina Raymundo 'light and easy' like her songs

DOLLY WOOD



Dolly Anne Carvajal

MOTHERHOOD has mellowed **Ina Raymundo**.

Ina no longer wants to do bold roles. She ought to be on a roll after winning a Best Actress award for her role in "Tuhog." Instead she's bent on reviving her singing career, which was abruptly cut when she got married and had a child.

"I want to keep everything wholesome for my baby," she said. "In fact, I no longer smoke or drink. I exercise a lot and eat right. I make sure I'm healthy for my little girl who's now seven months old."

Doesn't sound like the girl whose body launched a thousand oohs and aahs and sold tons of beer.

Other actresses would have grabbed any movie offer and jacked up their asking price after bagging an award. But Ina would rather rest on her laurels and just rest in the family love nest.

"I've never been happier," she said. "Now I'm at peace. Launching my album 'Touch Me where it's Hot' is enough for me. I'm done with working too hard. I devote my time to my family now. My songs are light and easy. Sort of what I feel now."

Joy is written all over her face. I know she went through a lot. Her conservative family from Bulacan almost disowned her when they saw the trailer and the ads of her movie "Burlesk Queen Ngayon." I remember interviewing her grandmother at the height of the controversy. She could hardly bear seeing her favorite granddaughter bare it all. Ina wept profusely on national TV.

That's why I'm happy to see Ina in full bloom now as a wife and a mother. She's an inspiration to all women who struggle. Never tire of trying. For all the knowledge we have gained and all the success we have achieved, there are still times we just need a hand to hold as we walk through the storm.

I'm at that point right now so I thank my friend Ina for reminding me to keep on believing in the sun even when it's raining.

'Storybook'

GOT to chat with The CompanY. I teased the group: "So, are you good or bad company?"

Master composer **Moy Ortiz** laughed: "Depends on what time of the day you see us."

They are proud of their newest album, "Storybook." Andre (my co-newscaster in "Junior Newswatch" many hairstyles ago) quipped: "We called it Storybook because all the songs in it are sort of interconnected by a theme. Just like reading a book."

A cut from the album, "Baka Ikaw," will surely hit the bullseye in any true-blue romantic's heart. It's a bittersweet love song.

Check out "Storybook" in record bars. The Company's songs will definitely make you love happily ever after as you go through chapter after chapter of love's many episodes.

Girl talk

ENJOYED my girl's talk with Tin **Tin Bersola** and **Pinky Webb** while we were all having our make-up done before showtime. I love Tin-Tin's being so "real" and Pinky's being so down-to-earth.

When I told Tin-tin how pretty her peach off-shouldered top was, she volunteered, "Bought it for P150 only. I'm a *tiangge* girl, ever."

I said, "It's not what you wear. It's how you carry it that counts. With your poise, you always look classy and expensive!"

No girl's talk would be complete without the subject of guys. Pinky and Tin-tin were bursting with laughter when I told them my love adventures and misadventures. Pinky advised me to go for older men, not younger guys. "Old does not mean boring," she said. "As long as he's just older by a few years, that's okay. But not too old that he's like a father figure."

Here's to more hilarious laughing trips, Tin and Pinky!

For feedback, e-mail friends_at_dsquare@yahoo.com

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5	SPIDERMAN
6	I AM SAM
7	JASON-X
8	K-PAX
9	VIDEOKE KING
10	SCORPION KING

SM CITY FAIRVIEW
9350749

1	JASON-X
2	K-PAX
3	7 DAYS TO LIVE
4	SPIDERMAN
5	SPIDERMAN
6	VIDEOKE KING
7	SPIDERMAN
8	SPIDERMAN
9	VIDEOKE KING
10	ROLLERBALL
11	SCORPION KING
12	HARDBALL

SM CITY MANILA
5239240

1	K-PAX
2	SPIDERMAN
3	JASON-X
4	SPIDERMAN
5	SCORPION KING
6	SPIDERMAN
7	SPIDERMAN
8	HARDBALL
9	VIDEOKE KING
10	I AM SAM
11	7 DAYS TO LIVE
12	SPIDERMAN

SM MEGAMALL
6331901 • 6329401

1	SPIDERMAN
2	HARDBALL
3	JASON-X
4	SPIDERMAN
5	K-PAX
6	SCORPION KING
7	7 DAYS TO LIVE
8	SPIDERMAN
9	VIDEOKE KING
10	SPIDERMAN
11	I AM SAM
12	COUNT OF MONTE CRISTO

SM CITY NORTH EDSA
9295452

1	JASON-X
2	SPIDERMAN
3	K-PAX
4	VIDEOKE KING
5	HARDBALL
6	SPIDERMAN
7	SCORPION KING
8	SPIDERMAN
9	CLOSED
10	CLOSED
11	CLOSED
12	CLOSED

SM SOUTHMALL
8068888

1	HARDBALL
2	JASON-X
3	SPIDERMAN
4	K-PAX
5	SPIDERMAN
6	SCORPION KING
7	VIDEOKE KING
8	SPIDERMAN
9	7 DAYS TO LIVE
10	SPIDERMAN

SM CITY CEBU
2313876

1	SPIDERMAN
2	SPIDERMAN
3	SHOWTIME
4	SCORPION KING
5	HARDBALL
6	RIPPER
7	VIDEOKE KING
8	SPIDERMAN

SM CITY ILOILO
3209422

1	RIPPER
2	CLOSED
3	SPIDERMAN
4	SHOWTIME
5	VIDEOKE KING
6	SPIDERMAN
7	CLOSED
8	SCORPION KING

SM CITY PAMPANGA
7128015

1	SPIDERMAN
2	SPIDERMAN
3	I AM SAM
4	DEVIL'S MASK
5	RETURN TO NEVERLAND
6	VIDEOKE KING

SM SUPER CTR. SUCAT
8294975

1	JASON-X
2	SPIDERMAN
3	SPIDERMAN
4	VIDEOKE KING

SM CINEMA GUADALUPE
8820984

1	CLOSED FOR RENOVATION
2	CLOSED FOR RENOVATION
3	CLOSED FOR RENOVATION

SM CINEMA TUTUBAN
2514302

1	SPIDERMAN
2	JASON-X
3	SPIDERMAN
4	VIDEOKE KING

SM CITY DAVAO
2976998

1	SPIDERMAN
2	HART'S WAR
3	VIDEOKE KING
4	TIME MACHINE
5	SPIDERMAN
6	BLADE 2

SM BICUTAN

1
2
3
4

SOON TO OPEN!
4 NEW
STATE-OF-THE-ART
VISION & SOUND

SM CITY CAGAYAN DE ORO

1
2
3
4

SOON TO OPEN!
4 NEW
STATE-OF-THE-ART
VISION & SOUND

THE PODIUM
18 ADB Ave. [illegible] Ortigas Center, Mandaluyong City

1
2

SOON TO OPEN!
2 NEW STATE-OF-THE-ART VISION & SOUND

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G1 (GLORIETTA 1)

1	VIDEOKE KING
2	SPIDERMAN
3	HARDBALL
4	SPIDERMAN

G4 (GLORIETTA 4)

1	SPIDERMAN
2	SPIDERMAN
3	THX SPIDERMAN 12:20, 2:50, 5:20, 7:50, 10:20 GUARANTEED SEATS
4	JASON-X
5	K-PAX
6	SPIDERMAN
7	HARDBALL

GB1 (GREENBELT 1)

1	K-PAX
2	SPIDERMAN
3	SPIDERMAN
4	Onstage MARTIN NIEVERA BACK ONSTAGE May 17, 18, 24, 25, 31 & June 1

ATC (ALABANG TOWN CENTER)

1	THX SPIDERMAN
2	SPIDERMAN
3	HARDBALL
4	SPIDERMAN
5	K-PAX

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MOVIE GUIDE
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EMAIL: mmta@asia.com

Filinvest FESTIVAL CINEMA
(Muntinlupa) tel 850.3571 or 72

1 (DDS)	I AM SAM
2 (SDDS)	SPIDERMAN
3 (DTS)	HARDBALL
4 GOLD (DTS)	JASON-X
5 GOLD (DOLBY)	SPIDERMAN
6 GOLD (SDDS)	SPIDERMAN
7 GOLD (DOLBY)	SPIDERMAN
8	VIDEOKE KING
9	K-PAX
10	7 DAYS TO LIVE

Pearl Plaza Cinemas
(Parañaque) tel. 853.4486

1	RESERVE
2	RESERVE
3 (DTS)	ROLLERBALL
4	RESERVE
5	RESERVE
6 (DTS)	SPIDERMAN
Golden Pearl THX	

Masagana CINEMA
(Pasay) tel 833.3274

1	VIDEOKE KING
2	SPIDERMAN
3	BUKANG BIBIG

starmall Movies
(Shaw Blvd.) tel 724.4986

1	HARDBALL
2	JASON X
3	7 DAYS TO LIVE
4 (DOLBY DIGITAL)	SPIDERMAN
5	BUKANG BIBIG

METROPOLIS star
tel 850.4285

1	JASON X
2	BUKANG BIBIG
3	VIDEOKE KING
4	SPIDERMAN
5	SCORPION KING
6	SPIDERMAN
7	
8	

PREMIERE CINEMA THX
(Makati City) TEL. 751-2010 TO 13

1	STAR WARS EPISODE-II

Center Plaza Cinema
(Balanga, Bataan) tel (047) 237.7007

1	VIDEOKE KING
2	SCORPION KING

FCM FAIRVIEW CENTER MALL, INC
tel 930.9515

1	RESERVE
2	BUKANG BIBIG
3	RESERVE

Spring
(Libertad, Pasay City) tel 831.7864

1	
A	VIDEOKE KING

Sunshine
(FTI, Taguig) tel 838.4301 loc. 3376

1	SPIDERMAN
2	VIDEOKE KING
3	
4	

GOTESCO CINEMA

Gotesco City
(Manila) tel 734.8588

1 (DOLBY)	SPIDERMAN
2	RESERVE
3	RESERVE
4	HARDBALL
5	JASON-X
6	7 DAYS TO LIVE
7 (DTS)	K-PAX
8 (SDDS)	SPIDERMAN
9 (DOLBY)	SPIDERMAN

Gotesco Caloocan
tel 362.3508

2	VIDEOKE KING

Gotesco Grand Central
(Caloocan) tel 364.3781

1	VIDEOKE KING
2	SABAYAN SA LABAN
3	HARDBALL
4 (SDDS)	SPIDERMAN
5	SPIDERMAN
6 (DOLBY)	SPIDERMAN
7 (DTS)	JASON X
8	BUKANG BIBIG
9	SCORPION KING

Gotesco Commonwealth
tel 951.0083

1 (DTS)	RESERVE
2	BUKANG BIBIG
3	RESERVE
4	JASON X
5 (SDDS)	SPIDERMAN
6	RESERVE
7 (DOLBY)	SPIDERMAN
8	VIDEOKE KING

Gotesco Ortigas
tel 656.6795

1	VIDEOKE KING
2	JASON X
3 (DTS)	SPIDERMAN
4	BUKANG BIBIG
5 (SDDS)	SPIDERMAN

Universal
(Manila) tel 733.2470

1	SABAYAN SA LABAN

Sampaquita
(Cubao) tel 911.7888

1	VIDEOKE KING

Dilson
(Manila) tel 734.7724

Dilson	SABAYAN SA LABAN
Lords	
Jennet	

MARKETPLACE
Mandaluyong
tel 533.3851 / 533.3856

1	SPIDERMAN
2	VIDEOKE KING
3	JASON X

Prima
(Pasig) tel 641.1215

3	

Isetann Cinerama Complex Recto
SUPER CINERAMA
tel 733.4238

1 (DOLBY)	SPIDERMAN
2	RESERVE
3	RESERVE
4	VIDEOKE KING
5	SABAYAN SA LABAN

New Divisoria Mall
DIVISORIA CINEMA
tel 244.4619

1	
2	
3	
4	
5	
6	

FRC Cinema
Talaba Bacoor Cavite

1	
2	

Berma
tel 879.2029

1	SPIDERMAN
2	VIDEOKE KING

CitiMall
(Parañaque) tel 820.7269

1	
2	

CINEMA 2000

Cinema 2000 Target Mall
(Sta. Rosa Laguna)
tel (049) 534.2185 / 534.2198

1	BUKANG BIBIG
2	VIDEOKE KING
3 (DTS)	SPIDERMAN

Cinema 2000 Waltermart
(Calamba) tel (049) 545.7383

1	SPIDERMAN
2 (DTS)	VIDEOKE KING
3 (DOLBY)	SPIDERMAN
4	I AM SAM

Cinema 2000 Pavilion Mall
(Biñan) tel (049) 411.1146

1	VIDEOKE KING
2 (DOLBY)	SPIDERMAN
3 (DTS)	SPIDERMAN
4	I AM SAM

Cinema 2000 Cinemagix
(Urdaneta) tel(075) 568.6771

1	VIDEOKE KING
2	SHOWTIME
3	SOON TO OPEN
4	SOON TO OPEN

Cinema 2000 MetroTown
(Tarlac) tel(045) 982.1729

1	VIDEOKE KING
2	SPIDERMAN
3 (DOLBY)	SPIDERMAN
4 (DTS)	SHOWTIME

Lianas Cinema
(Alabang) tel 850.1276

1 (SDDS)	SPIDERMAN
2	BUKANG BIBIG
3	KALARO
4 (DTS)	VIDEOKE KING

Lianas MovieCity
(Calamba) tel (049) 545.7202

1 (DOLBY)	SPIDERMAN
2	VIDEOKE KING
3 (DTS)	I AM SAM
4	BUKANG BIBIG
5	RIPPER

Olivarez Tri-Cinema
(Biñan) tel (049) 511.8883

1	SPIDERMAN
2	VIDEOKE KING
3	BUKANG BIBIG

Olivarez Los Baños
tel (049) 249-2558

1	SPIDERMAN
2	VIDEOKE KING
3	BUKANG BIBIG

Olivarez Tagaytay
tel (046) 413.0311

1	HART'S WAR
2	SCORPION KING
3	GAWIN SA DILIM

Morales Cinema
(Diñan) tel (049) 511.9736

1	
2	
3	

Cabuyao
(Laguna City) tel (049) 531.4808

1 (DTS)	
2 (DTS)	SPIDERMAN

Fourstep
(Cavite) tel (046) 416.2385

1	

Emperor
(Rosario Cavite) tel (046) 438.1657

1	VIDEOKE KING
2	SPIDERMAN
3	SPIDERMAN

Fiesta World Mall
(Lipa) tel (043) 981.0790

1	BUKANG BIBIG
2	SCORPION KING
3	SHOWTIME
4	VIDEOKE KING

Jade Cinema
(Angeles City) tel (045) 887.5001 to 03

1 (DOLBY EX)	SPIDERMAN
2	EVIL WOMAN
3 (DTS)	SPIDERMAN
4	DEVIL'S MASK

*Movies are subject to change without prior notice

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EPISODE II

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Galleria
632- 9115- 16
633- 7641 loc. 279

1 THX	SPIDERMAN
2	SPIDERMAN
3	K-PAX
4	I AM SAM
5	JASON-X
6	SPIDERMAN
7	7 DAYS TO LIVE
8	HARDBALL
9	SCORPION KING
10	VIDEOKE KING

Ermita
536 -7809- 12

1	SPIDERMAN
2	7 DAYS TO LIVE
3	HARDBALL
4	K-PAX
5	VIDEOKE KING
6	SPIDERMAN
7	JASON-X

Metro East -
Marcos hway
682- 8193 / 8280

1	K-PAX
2	SPIDERMAN
3	SCORPION KING
4	I AM SAM / 7 DAYS TO LIVE
5	SPIDERMAN
6	VIDEOKE KING
7	JASON-X
8	HARDBALL

Novaliches
935- 3229 - 30

1	SPIDERMAN
2	SPIDERMAN
3	I AM SAM / 7 DAYS TO LIVE
4	SCORPION KING
5	K-PAX
6	VIDEOKE KING
7	HARD BALL
8	JASON-X

Imus
471- 8188 / 875- 3838

1	SPIDERMAN
2	KAPIRASONG GUBAT / 7 DAYS TO LIVE
3	JASON-X
4	K-PAX
5	VIDEOKE KING
6	HARDBALL

Bacolod
441- 0453 / 0459

1	SPIDERMAN
2	HART'S WAR
3	BLADE 2
4	BLOW DRY
5	VIDEOKE KING
6	SCORPION KING / ICE AGE

Iloilo
336- 8077 - 78

1	SPIDERMAN
2	SHOWTIME
3	SPIDERMAN
4	RIPPER
5	GOOD ADVICE
6	VIDEOKE KING

Star Mills-
Sn. Fernando, Pamp.
875- 1927
961-5318 / 5270

1	I AM SAM
2	VIDEOKE KING
3	SPIDERMAN
4	SCORPION KING
5	DEVIL'S MASK
6	SPIDERMAN

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http://www.robinsonsmovieworld.com
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Bedrock Adriatico holds 2-night birthday party

BEDROCK Bar and Grill Restaurant in Malate celebrates its second anniversary with a two-night special event on May 18 and 19.

"Guests can expect a party that will end all parties," promises Bedrock Malate restaurant manager Ronald Ngo.

The two-night celebration gathers together the country's most promising bands to perform pop, R&B, disco, jazz, rock, alternative and techno. Check out live performances by Altered, Big Nite Out, Fastrack, MMC, New Level, Nexxus, Part-E, Red Sector-A, R.O.B., Skin, Slide, X2C and Heat of the Night.

"Every band break, we will be holding contests and we'll give away gifts and other surprises," says Ngo.

Bedrock's second birthday bash is made possible by San Miguel Beer, Pepsi Cola, Premiere Wines, International Distillers Philippines, Jardine Calbeck, and PTC Commercial Corp.

Bedrock Bar and Grill Restaurant opened on Adriatico Street in May 2000. Its "new and unique" concept is integrated in the menu lineup, particularly the introduction of the cooking process called stone grilling, where guests grill their food on a slab of stone.

The concept's success spawned a second branch in Makati's own restaurant and party district, Jupiter Street, where a bigger Bedrock opened last January.

For information, call 522-7279 to 80 for Malate and 897-3480 to 81 for Makati.

May all abloom in Star Malls

FLOWERS will be in full bloom this summer at the Star Group of Malls when they pick their image models to highlight the May celebrations.

Metropolis Star in Alabang will launch the "Starbabe Beauty and Talent Search 2002" on May 24. Female contestants must be Filipino, 16 to 21 years old, at least 5-foot-2, with pleasing personality.

Those who wish to join can register at the Mall Customer Service.

On May 25, the Starland resort and theme park will hold a Santacruzan.

Mstar in Las Piñas will launch "Mstar Babe" on May 25. It is open to young women 16 to 21 years old, with "fun" personalities and that "Mstar confidence." Contest details are available at the Mstar Marketing Office at the mall.

The Star Model Quest grand finals will be held on May 26 at the Starmall on Shaw Boulevard corner Edsa. The contest will be held just after the Flores de Mayo which will feature the male and female finalists.

Starmall also presents a food fair on the third level where customers can choose from a wide variety of regional and international dishes.

The weekly shows at the Starmall Bridgeway on the third level will also continue, with "Comedy Nights" every Wednesday and "Seasons" every Friday. Young singer Pola Salvador will headline "Seasons."

Mariah Carey . . .

From page A26

In addition to three albums, Universal has also agreed to collaborate with Carey on her other endeavours, including films and online projects.

The pop singer, who shot to superstardom in the 1990s, has had more number-one songs than any other artist, with the exception of musical royalty Elvis Presley and The Beatles.

Raised in New York by her mother, a former opera singer and vocal coach, Carey started singing at the age of four, and was writing songs by junior high school, according to the website of Columbia, one of her former labels.

She first came into the public eye in 1990 with the self-titled album "Mariah Carey."

She went on to produce 15 number ones in the US chart, becoming the only artist to have had a number one in every year of the 1990s, according to Columbia.

But last year's "Glitter" sold only 535,000 copies in the United States compared to the 7.5 million sales of her hit album "Daydream" in 1995. *AFP*

THEATER MOVIE GUIDE

ARANETA CENTER THEATERS 911-3101	
ALI MALL CINEPLEX-1	VIDEOKE KING
ALI MALL CINEPLEX-2	7 DAYS TO LIVE
ALI MALL CINEPLEX-3 (DDS)	JASON X
ALI MALL CINEPLEX-4 (SDDS)	SPIDERMAN
ALI MALL CINEPLEX-5 (DTS)	SPIDERMAN
ALI MALL CINEPLEX-6 (DOLBY)	HARDBALL
ALI MALL CINEPLEX-7 (DOLBY)	K-PAX
FARMERS PLAZA-1 (DOLBY)	KAPIRASONG GUBAT
FARMERS PLAZA-2 (DOLBY)	SPIDERMAN
FIESTA CARNIVAL	
NEW FRONTIER	
MANILA	
EASTERN	
MAXIM	CLOSED
MIRAMAR	ESKANDALOSA / TEQUILA BODY SHOT
ODEON	JASON-X
ODEON-2	SCORPION KING
ROBEN	KAPIRASONG GUBAT
TANDEM-1	ITLOG
TANDEM-2	IKA-7 GLORYA
TIMES	GLASS HOUSE / DOMESTIC DISTURBANCE
QUEZON CITY	
ACT-1	SENSUAL ISLAND
ACT-2	KAYA KO PERO MASAKIT
ACT-3	CLOSED
ACT-4	CLOSED
CORONET-2	ORIGINAL SIN
QUEZON-1	BUKANG BIBIG
REMAR	VIDEOKE KING
REMAR-2	BUKANG BIBIG
NOVA MALL - NOVALICHES CINEMA	
A	VIDEOKE KING
B	KAPIRASONG GUBAT
C	
MANDALUYONG CITY	
SHANGRI-LA PLAZA MALL	635-20-79 / 633-78-51 TO 70
CINEMA-1	K-PAX
CINEMA-2	SPIDERMAN
CAINTA RIZAL	
STA. LUCIA EAST	(681-6401 TO 19)
CINEMA-1	I AM SAM
CINEMA-2	BUKANG BIBIG
CINEMA-3	VIDEOKE KING
CINEMA-4 (DOLBY DIGITAL)	7 DAYS TO LIVE
CINEMA-5 (DTS)	HARDBALL
CINEMA-6	BENEATH LOCHNESS
CINEMA-7	KAPIRASONG GUBAT
CINEMA-8	SCORPION KING
CINEMA-9 (DTS)	SPIDERMAN
CINEMA-10 (DOLBY DIGITAL)	SPIDERMAN
CINEMA-11 (SDDS)	SPIDERMAN
CINEMA-12	K-PAX
CINEMA-14	JASON X
CINEMA-15	VIDEOKE KING
LORES	
CINEMA-2	CLOSED
CINEMA-3	CLOSED
POWER PLANT CINEMA	
CINEMA-1	K-PAX
CINEMA-2	SPIDERMAN
CINEMA-3	HARDBALL
CINEMA-4	SPIDERMAN
CINEMA-5	JASON X
CINEMA-6	SPIDERMAN
UNIWIDE METROMALL	
(LAS PINAS)	
CINEMA-1	
CINEMA-2	
CINEMA-4	
UNIWIDE COASTAL MALL	
(PARANAQUE)	
CINEMA-1	ALIPIN NG TUKSO
CINEMA-2	THE OTHER SIDE OF LOVE
CINEMA-4	ALAMID

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GP
2 SPIDERMAN
11:00, 1:30, 4:00, 6:30, 9:00
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MUSIC MUSEUM May 11, 2002 REIGNE ON TOUR (Regine Velasquez) 9:00 pm / May 17, 2002 SIDE A "A Timeless Rendezvous" 9:00 pm
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POWER PLANT
CINEMA
Rockwell Center, Makati City ☎ Tel. No: 8981440-41
DOLBY DIGITAL SURROUND-EX

K-PAX - P13
12:00, 2:30, 5:00, 7:30, 10:00

SPIDERMAN - GP
1:20, 4:00, 6:40, 9:20

HARDBALL - P13
12:50, 3:05, 5:20, 7:35, 9:50

SPIDERMAN - GP
12:40, 3:20, 6:00, 8:40

JASON X - P13
1:20, 3:25, 5:30, 7:35, 9:40

SPIDERMAN - GP
2:00, 4:40, 7:20, 10:00

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TONTON GUTIERREZ and GLYDEL MERCADO

Sana Totoo Na
BERTING LABRA JACKIE CASTILLEJO JOSEPH BALTAZAR
Guest Appearances PRECIOUS VALENCIA NICOLE NOBLE IVANA CAPES
Directed by ARMAN REYES, kdlpp

the all-digital-sound
AYALA CINEMAS
GLORIETTA 1&4/GREENBELT/ALABANG TOWN CENTER
COLUMBIA PICTURES

SPIDER-MAN
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Vortex
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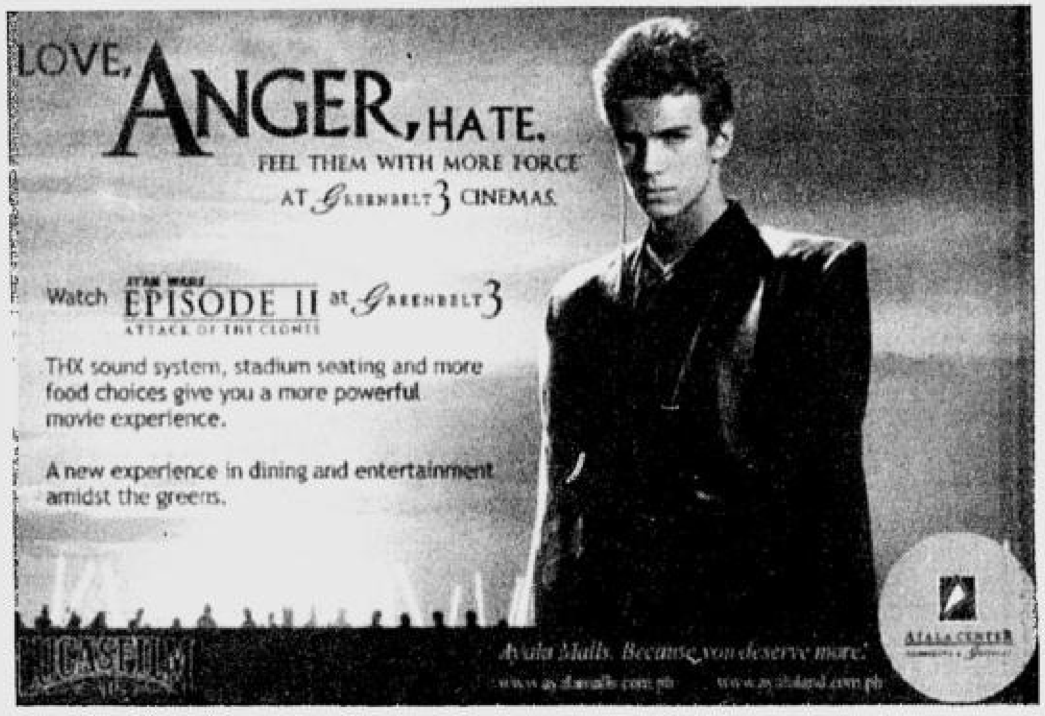
JAG
MARVEL



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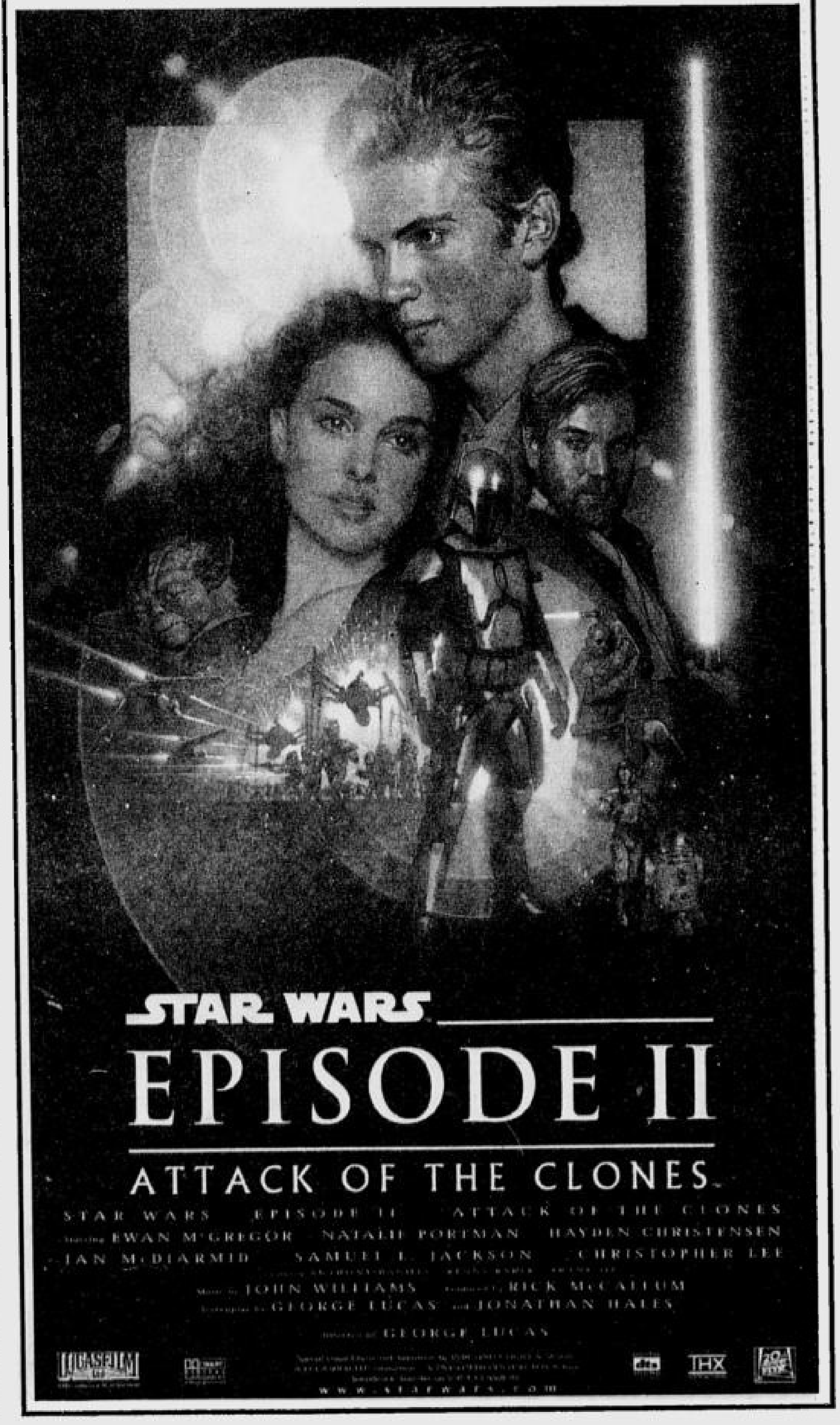


STAR WARS
EPISODE II
ATTACK OF THE CLONES
STAR WARS EPISODE II ATTACK OF THE CLONES
starring EWAN McGREGOR NATALIE PORTMAN HAYDEN CHRISTENSEN
IAN McDIARMID SAMUEL L. JACKSON CHRISTOPHER LEE
Music by JOHN WILLIAMS Produced by RICK McCALLUM
Screenplay by GEORGE LUCAS and JONATHAN HALES
Directed by GEORGE LUCAS
THX
WWW.STARWARS.COM

ENTERTAINMENT

Editor **Louie C. Camino**

What viewers don't hear in 'Private Conversation'

KEEPING an interesting conversation going is far from being a breeze. Eavesdropping on a private conversation between Boy Abunda and some of the country's youngest congressmen will tell you why.

It appears uncomplicated, especially when you're just watching them on TV. But although digging deep into the private lives of personalities isn't simple, Boy makes it seem so.

"Private Conversations with Boy Abunda," a no-holds-barred interview with some of the most controversial, influential and famous personalities in the country, continues to show why Boy is on top of the hosting heap.

People behind "Private Conversations" go through a lot before each episode, preparing the set, the script, lights, and other elements of the show. They have to deal with the minutest detail, especially since Boy wants no room left for mistakes.

Then the interviewees enter the picture. In this particular episode, they are Representatives Francis Escudero (1st District, Sorsogon), Felix William "Wimpy" Fuentebella (3rd District, Camarines Sur), Rep. Darlene Antonino-Custodio (1st District, South Cotabato and General Santos City), and Maite Defensor (2nd District, Quezon City).

TOP of the heap in the hosting field, Boy Abunda pries and probes.

Q & A. Boy with subjects (from left) Representatives Darlene Antonino-Custodio, Maite Defensor, Francis Escudero and Wimpy Fuentebella.

These young lawmakers are used to debating before a big audience of fellow legislators, but can they take the heat of Boy's fiery questions?

"I actually did not prepare for this," Escudero says. "I expect him to ask unexpected and personal stuff, but I believe we'll most likely enjoy this."

According to Fuentebella, his colleagues in the House of Representatives session hall were earlier teasing them about Boy's "mirror."

"Boy Abunda is known as a very good and credible host," Antonino-Custodio says. "He asks questions the viewers themselves would want to ask if they were in his position."

The young lawmakers expect to be asked questions mostly about politics. But they're in for a big surprise. Prying and probing, Boy does not only barrage them with political questions, but also with personal ones. They are by turns passionate and calm, shocked and poised, composed and then caught off guard.

During the Fast Talk segment, Boy has second thoughts about asking the young men a very personal sexual question. At least one congressman could have answered it and make the show unforgettable. But then, again, this is Boy interviewing. He does not ask the question.

Almed Garcia, Contributor

Mariah Carey bounces back with $20-M deal

LOS ANGELES—Troubled diva Mariah Carey has scored a stunning comeback by sealing a new $20-million recording deal with a top label just months after being dumped by a rival firm, music sources said last week.

The contract between Carey, the biggest-selling female artist in history, and Universal Music unit Island Def Jam Records comes just four months after Virgin Records let her go with a record $28-million golden handshake.

It also follows the famously hardworking singer and songwriter's reported nervous breakdown last year when she collapsed after more than a decade of almost non-stop recording and acting work.

"This is a major comeback for Mariah and its probably going to be the music comeback story of the entire year," Def Jam spokesperson Peter LoFrumento said by telephone from New York where the contract was signed Wednesday.

While LoFrumento declined to reveal the value of the contract, company sources said it was worth $20 million, a bargain compared to her record $80-million deal with Virgin.

Under the pact, the Grammy Award winning Carey, 31, will receive around $7.5 million apiece to make at least three albums for the company.

British music group EMI, which owns Virgin Records, paid off Carey, one of the most popular singers of the 1990s, in January after her latest album "Glitter"—and film of the same name—flopped and she suffered a breakdown.

Island Def Jam Records is a unit of the French-owned Universal Vivendi music group, which claims to be the biggest music company on the planet in terms of market share.

But despite the "Glitter" debacle, Universal Music executives said they had absolute confidence in the singer and songwriter's "enormous talents" and were convinced she would again soar to new heights.

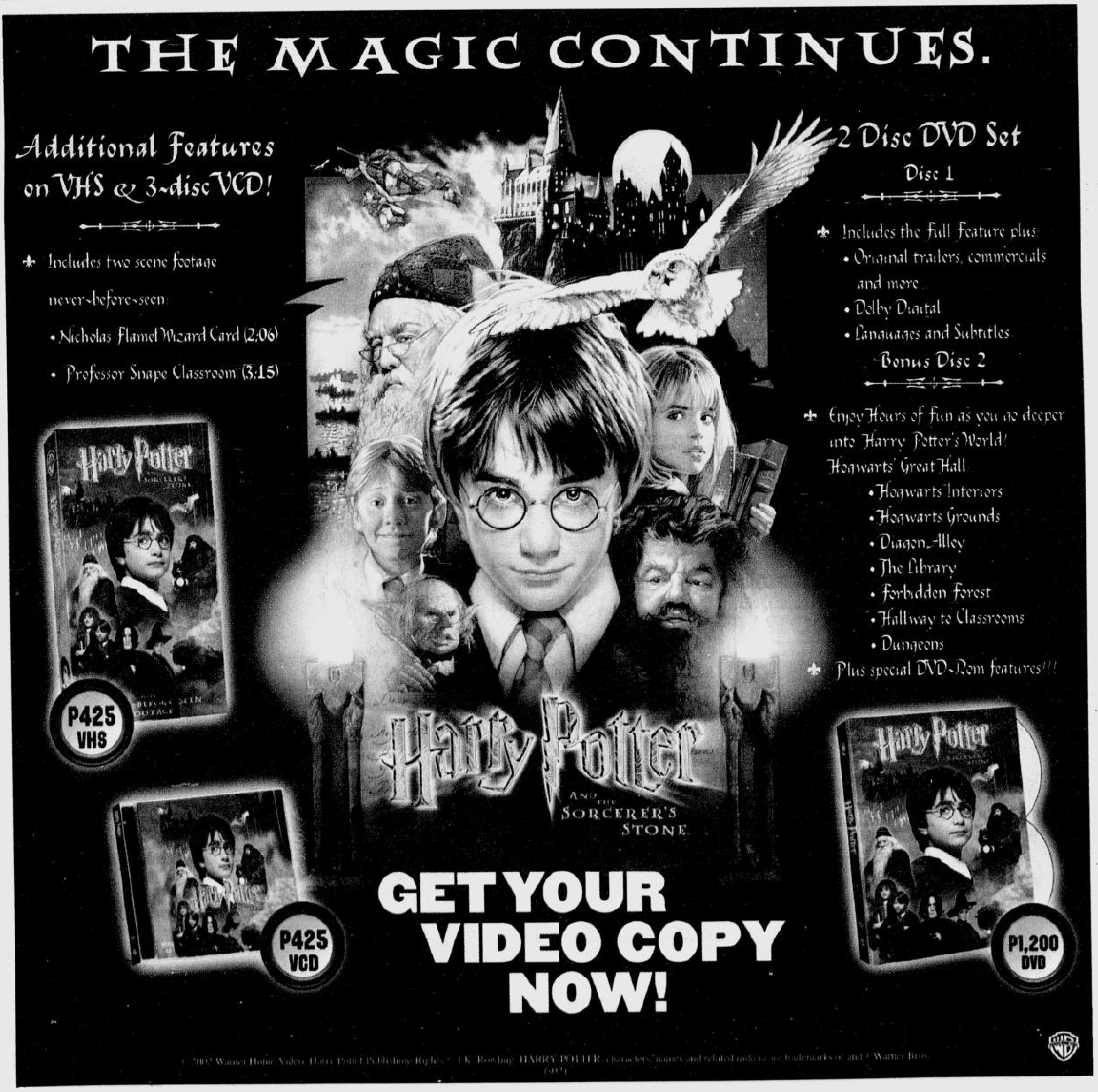
"There is a risk attached to everything you do in this business but the fact is that an artist of her caliber, a gifted vocalist and an incredibly talented songwriter, is what you want when you sign an artist," LoFrumento said.

"You have all those things . . . in Mariah Carey and everyone is really looking forward to getting into the studio, rolling up their sleeves and getting down to making a great record."

Def Jam's parent company Vivendi Universal also welcomed the singer with open arms.

"Mariah is an international treasure, and when she became a free agent, all of us at Universal saw it as a onetime opportunity, since artists of her caliber seldom become available," said the firm's Doug Morris.

WHAT/ A25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BUSINESS

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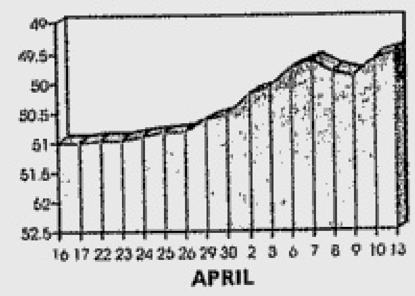
T-bill rate rises on budget gap concerns

INDICATORS

CURRENCIES



PESO-DOLLAR RATE

P 49.505 = $

As of 5 p.m., May 13, 2002

¥ 127.42 = $ 1

As of 5 p.m., May 13, 2002

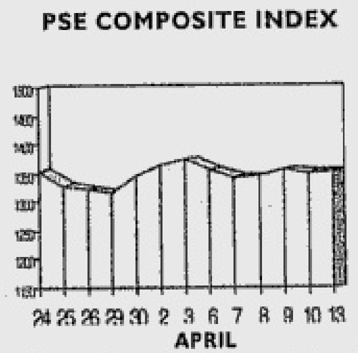
GOLD: $311.50/ 312.00

per ounce Hong Kong, May 13, 2002

May 13, 2002 Country	Unit	Euro Equivalent	Foreign currency in US$	Foreign currency in Peso
United States	Dollar	1.093972	1.000000	49.7370
Japan	Yen	0.008575	0.007838	0.3898
United Kingdom	Pound	1.601575	1.464000	72.8150
Hong Kong	Dollar	0.140272	0.128223	6.3774
Switzerland	Franc	0.687860	0.628773	31.2733
Canada	Dollar	0.702255	0.641931	31.9277
Singapore	Dollar	0.606852	0.554723	27.5903
Australia	Dollar	0.595845	0.544662	27.0899
Bahrain	Dinar	2.901937	2.652661	131.9354
Saudi Arabia	Rial	0.291726	0.266667	13.2632
Brunei	Dollar	0.603271	0.551450	27.4275
Indonesia	Rupiah	0.001181	0.001080	0.0537
Thailand	Baht	0.025500	0.023310	1.1594
UAE	Dirham	0.297858	0.272272	13.5420
Korea	Won	0.000861	0.000787	0.0391
Euro	Euro	1.000000	0.914100	45.4646
Brazil	Real	0.440940	0.403063	20.0471
Denmark	Kroner	0.134436	0.122888	6.1121
India	Rupee	0.022363	0.020442	1.0167
Malaysia	Ringgit	0.287888	0.263158	13.0887
Mexico	New Peso	0.115131	0.105241	5.2344
New Zealand	Dollar	0.494808	0.452304	22.4962
Norway	Kroner	0.132268	0.120906	6.0135
Pakistan	Rupee	0.018263	0.016694	0.8303
South Africa	Rand	0.107780	0.098522	4.9002
Sweden	Kroner	0.107093	0.097894	4.8690
Syria	Pound	0.024863	0.022727	1.1304
Taiwan	NT Dollar	0.031662	0.028942	1.4395
Venezuela	Bolivar	0.001143	0.001045	0.0520

STOCK MARKET

Shares rise 0.2%



(See stock market report on Page B2)

SHARE prices rose 0.2 percent yesterday in mixed trading amid a lack of strong leads, analysts said.

The Philippine Stock Exchange composite index gained 2.73 points to 1,353.50.

"Because of the absence of local leads, we're just looking at the US market for direction, and since the US market has failed to follow through on the rally and seems to be in consolidation, we are also in consolidation," said Jose Vistan of AB Capital Securities Inc.

Volume turnover rose to 236.7 million shares while value fell to P436.4 million from 233.62 million shares worth P863.31 million on Friday.

Globe Telecom rose P25 to P680 while Bank of the Philippine Islands dropped P1.50 to P67.

San Miguel Corp. "A" shares rose by 50 centavos to P50 but its "B" shares remained unchanged at P57.50.

Manila Electric Co. (Meralco) "A" shares added P2 to P27 while its "B" shares gained 50 centavos to P39.50. *AFP*

PLDT sets price for repurchase offer

PHILIPPINE Long Distance Telephone Co. (PLDT), the country's largest phone firm, said yesterday it will pay note holders who participated in the early repurchase tender offer of its 2003 and 2004 notes by May 17.

PLDT will pay the 2003 note holders $1,027.55 per $1,000 principal amount of notes while 2004 note holders will get $1,066.68 per $1,000 principal amount.

These payment prices were for note holders who tendered prior to the May 2 deadline for early repurchase payment, PLDT said in a statement.

The payment includes the tender offer yield (3.875 percent for 2003 notes and 5.25 percent for the 2004 notes) plus the early repurchase payment of $15 and tender offer consideration per $1,000 principal amount of notes.

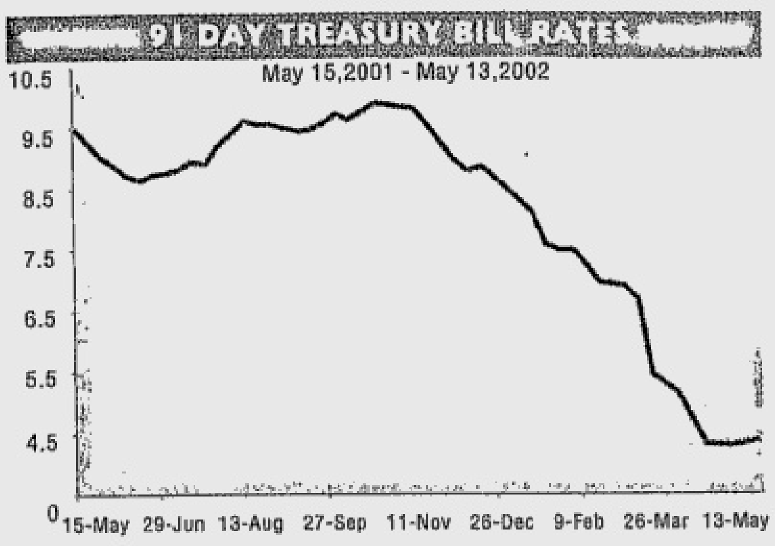
The offer will formally expire on May 15 at 5 p.m.

PLDT earlier extended its early repurchase date for the cash tender offer to May 2 from the original expiry date of April 25.

Credit Suisse First Boston and Morgan Stanley acted as dealer managers for the offers.

PLDT has drawn up a liability management program to refinance $1.3 billion in debts until 2004. It offered $350 million in 10-year and five-year fixed rate notes last month to raise money for debt repayments. *Reuters*

By Clarissa S. Batino



THE 91-DAY treasury bill rate rose for the first time this year at the government auction yesterday on worries the government may have overshot its budget-deficit target in the first quarter, officials said.

The benchmark yield, used by banks to set their own lending rates, rose to 4.381 percent from a historic low of 4.299 percent at the last auction two weeks ago.

It was the first time the rate had risen since December.

Banks pushed up the rates for the three-month and six-month treasuries in anticipation of higher borrowing requirements of the government to finance a growing fiscal problem.

The national government is expected to exceed its first-quarter budget gap by about P3 billion to P5 billion against the target of P52.933 billion.

"The market is speculating about negative news that the government will overshoot its budget deficit," Treasurer Sergio Edeza told reporters after the auction.

"The movement was an indication of fear rather than reality. The market should realize that at this point, the deficit in the first quarter had already been financed."

Finance Secretary Jose Isidro Camacho yesterday said the slight increase in the government's borrowing rate did not necessarily mean the start of higher interest rates.

"We are confident of meeting the P130-billion deficit target this year so I don't think yesterday's results signal the start of (an uptrend)," Camacho said.

The government has not announced the first-quarter deficit numbers. Camacho said last week that revenue collections had fallen below target.

Yesterday's auction was characterized by partial rejection of the offers for the benchmark and one-year instruments as well as under-subscription for the 182-day notes.

Despite a lack of interest in the

T-BILL/ B2

Agriculture growth hits 3.81% in 1st quarter

THE FARM sector recorded a growth of 3.81 percent in the first quarter, the Department of Agriculture said yesterday.

The agriculture sector expanded 3.10 percent in the same period last year.

Gross output amounted to P165.8 billion at current prices, the department said. Agriculture accounts for about 20 percent of the country's gross domestic product (GDP). The first quarter GDP data is expected to be announced later this month.

The Department said in a statement ample output gains in products such as *palay*, or unmilled rice, and mango, together with the stronger upturn in fishery production, offset the paltry or negative growth indicated by some major crops, such as coconut and coffee.

Early this year, Agriculture Secretary Leonardo Montemayor said he expected the country's farm sector to post modest growth of 2.7 to 3.7 percent for the whole of this year from 4.01 percent in 2001.

The crops subsector expanded by 2.83 percent during the quarter on the year, the same growth it posted in the first quarter of 2001. The agriculture department said this year's performance was boosted by output increases in all crops except coconut, pineapple, coffee and rubber.

Livestock production rose 3.72 percent in the first three months of the year against 2.11 percent growth last year, and the fishery subsector posted a 5.15-percent increase against 2.77-percent growth in the first quarter of 2001.

Palay production, one of the country's major crops, came back strongly from last year's setback of 1.49-percent negative growth to record an 8.76-percent increase this year, it said.

"Production was estimated at 3.06 million metric tons, a feat attributed to increases in both area harvested and yield," the Department said.

Coconut production dropped by 7.85 percent due to adverse effects of typhoons last year, it added.

The Philippines is the world's largest seller of coconut oil. *Reuters*

Montenegro export firm plans IPO

By Elena R. Torrijos

BUSINESSMAN Herman Montenegro's Pacific Activated Carbon Co. Inc., the largest coconut shell-based activated carbon maker in the world, is planning an initial public offering by November this year to raise P700 million to P1.2 billion.

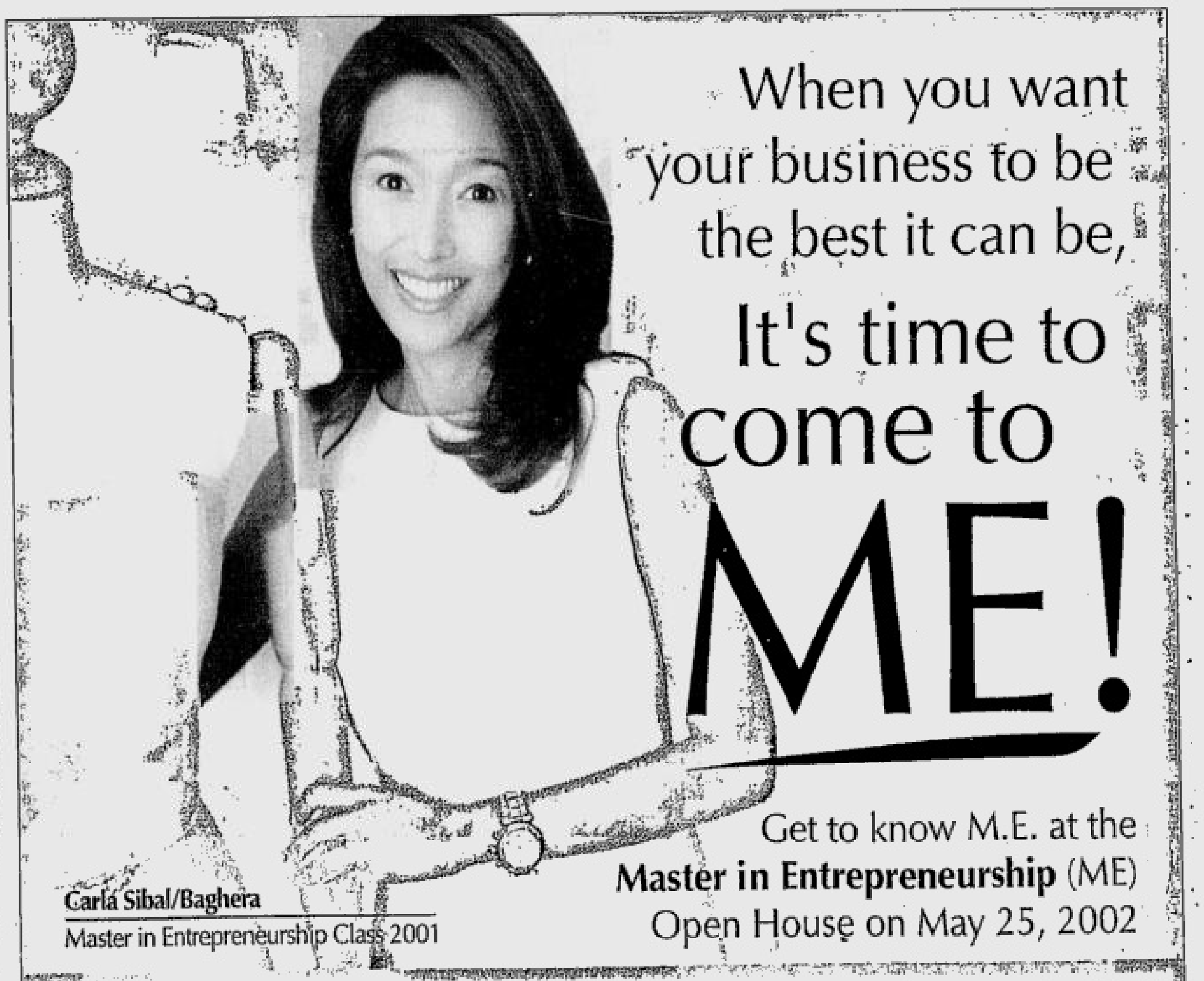
Documents from a presentation by the company to selected investors in a briefing at the Manila Polo Club last month showed that Pacco is raising the targeted amount through an IPO or with a private placement.

Pacco said it was offering at P3.85 per share a private placement of up to 50 million shares, which would represent 7.1 percent of the company after the lock-up period and the IPO. The private placement per share is a 27-percent discount to the low end of the projected IPO offering price range of P4.90 to P6.20 each.

The company noted that its private placement price per share offers a price-earning ratio (PER) of 14.32 times 2002 earnings forecast, a discount to the current PER of the Philippine Stock Exchange of 19.5 times earnings.

Proceeds of the IPO would be used for plant moderniza-

MONTENEGRO/ B2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Slump puts PAL back in the red; recovery seen this fiscal year

By Doris C. Dumlao

FLAG carrier Philippine Airlines flew into the red for the first time since it embarked on a financial rehabilitation in 1999 as the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks in the United States dampened people's appetite to travel.

PAL incurred a net loss of P1.5 billion for its fiscal year ended March 2002, a reversal of the P419-million net profit chalked up during the 2000-2001 period, according to latest figures obtained by INQUIRER.

In an interview yesterday, PAL president Avelino Zapanta confirmed the losses based on PAL's latest unaudited figures, lamenting that the airline would have ended up profitable for the third straight fiscal year if not for the adverse impact of the terrorist attacks in the United states.

But Zapanta noted that the bleeding for the last fiscal year was not as bad as the P2.5-billion loss revised projection made by PAL management after the Sept. 11 attacks.

"We were initially very pessimistic. Starting December, although revenues were still slow, things started to improve as OCWs (overseas Filipino workers) continued to travel. By January, we were hitting the targets and up to now, it has become manageable," Zapanta said.

He estimated that PAL enjoyed an 80-percent market share of the Filipino travelers segment.

"We were happy that our expectations on Filipino travelers materialized, leading to a gradual recovery in passenger traffic," he said.

Without the bleak impact of the attacks on tourism, he said PAL was on its way to reaping P1 billion in profits during the last fiscal year. He explained that the P2.11 billion in losses for the months of September, October and November had wiped out about P600 million in profits registered during the first five months of the fiscal year starting April last year.

Nevertheless, Zapanta said PAL's revenues for the last fiscal year were up by 10 percent to almost P43 billion from a year ago and 3.4 percent better than the revised target after Sept. 11.

PAL's expenditures hardly went up as well, he noted, growing by only 2 percent as against the 16-percent increase in the previous fiscal year.

Zapanta expressed confidence that the airline would revert to profitability for this fiscal year 2002-2003, but noted that the official targets were yet to be firmed up.

PAL was initially forced to cancel flights to the United States after suicide hijackers linked to international terrorist Osama Bin Laden crashed three of four seized US aircraft into the World Trade Center in New York and the Pentagon in Washington, D.C.

Because of recent setbacks, Zapanta said PAL had shelved the acquisition of a new Boeing 747 aircraft but assured that the airline would still expand into new routes. He said PAL would announce new international routes this June 21.

Aside from the terrorist attacks in the United States, PAL's passenger traffic was also adversely affected by the travel ban earlier implemented by Japan on the heels of the kidnappings by local terrorist group Abu Sayyaf in Mindanao. This negative travel advisory had brought down arrivals of tourists from western countries.

PHILIPPINE STOCK EXCHANGE

(As of Monday, May 13, 2002)

STOCKS	OPEN	HIGH	LOW	CLOSE	VOLUME
BANKS & FINANCIAL SERVICES					
BANKS					
Bank of the Phil. Islands	68.5	68.5	66.5	67	472,900
China Banking Corp.	625	625	625	625	170
Citystate Savings Bank	14.25	14.25	14.25	14.25	2,000
Equitable PCI Bank Inc.	37	37	37	37	99,200
First E-Bank Corp.	2.2	2.2	2.04	2.04	512,000
Metropolitan Bank & Trust	39.5	40	39.5	40	90,000
Philippine National Bank	43.5	43.5	38	39.5	47,000
Rizal Comm. Banking Corp.	12	12	12	12	15,000
Union Bank of the Phil.	22.75	23	22.75	23	36,200
FINANCIAL SERVICE					
Bankard Inc.	1.3	1.34	1.3	1.34	45,000
Filipino Fund Inc.	0.39	0.39	0.39	0.39	30,000
Manulife Financial Corp.	1450	1450	1450	1450	2,950
Sun Life Financial Serv.	1065	1070	1055	1070	62,730
COMMERCIAL & INDUSTRIAL					
COMMUNICATION					
ABS-CBN Broadcasting Corp.	31	31	31	31	21,600
Digital Telecom Phils Inc.	0.59	0.6	0.59	0.6	1,310,000
Globe Telecom Inc.	655	680	655	680	42,640
Island Info And Tech Inc.	0.038	0.043	0.038	0.04	9,700,000
Piltel	0.44	0.44	0.44	0.44	170,000
Phil. Long Dis Tel Co.	460	462.5	460	460	24,370
Philweb.Com Inc.	0.018	0.018	0.016	0.017	47,100,000
POWER & ENERGY					
Manila Electric Co. A	25	27	25	27	96,000
Manila Electric Co. B	39	39.5	39	39.5	338,800
Petron Corp.	1.68	1.7	1.66	1.68	6,226,000
Salcon Power Corp.	1.7	1.7	1.7	1.7	1,000
Trans-Asia Oil and Energy	0.9	0.9	0.9	0.9	270,000
TRANSPORTATION SERVICES					
Int'l Container Term'l Sv	2.85	2.9	2.8	2.85	957,000
CONSTRUCTION & OTHER RELATED PRODUCTS					
Alsons Cement Corp.	0.16	0.16	0.16	0.16	90,000
Engineering Equip. Inc.	0.28	0.28	0.28	0.28	50,000
Union Cement Corp.	0.65	0.66	0.65	0.66	400,000
FOOD, BEVERAGES & TOBACCO					
Alaska Milk Corp.	2.08	2.08	2.08	2.08	25,000
Jollibee Foods Corp.	14	14	13.75	13.75	1,446,800
La Tondena Distillers Inc.	35	35	33	35	3,297,400
RFM Corp.	1.3	1.32	1.3	1.32	60,000
Swift Food Inc.	1.5	1.5	1.5	1.5	1,000
San Miguel Corp. A	49	50	49	50	437,200
San Miguel Corp. B	57.5	57.5	57.5	57.5	415,500
Vitarich Corp.	0.31	0.31	0.31	0.31	10,000
HOLDING FIRMS					
Ayala Corp.	5.9	6	5.8	6	1,158,000
Aboitiz Equity Ventures	2.22	2.32	2.22	2.3	2,482,000
Ajo.Net Holdings Inc.	0.26	0.26	0.26	0.26	30,000
Alcorn Gold Res. Corp.	0.0085	0.009	0.0085	0.009	21,000,000
Anglo Phil Holdings Corp.	0.29	0.29	0.28	0.28	400,000
ATN Holdings Inc.	3.2	3.3	2.9	3.05	240,000
ATN Holdings Inc. B	3.15	3.15	3	3	25,000
Baguio Gold Holdings Corp.	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	10,000
Boulevard Holdings Inc.	0.14	0.14	0.14	0.14	130,000
Benpres Holdings Corp.	0.59	0.59	0.57	0.57	5,940,000
Basic Consolidated Inc.	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	100,000
Crown Equities Inc.	0.29	0.29	0.29	0.29	50,000
DMCI Holdings Inc.	0.25	0.25	0.25	0.25	300,000
Ebecom Holdings Inc.	7.5	7.5	7.5	7.5	14,000
First Phil Hldgs Corp.	26	26.5	26	26.5	120,100
Global Equities Inc.	0.13	0.13	0.13	0.13	20,000
House of Investments Inc.	0.42	0.42	0.42	0.42	20,000
Ionics Inc.	6.8	6.8	6.8	6.8	20,000
Megaworld Corp.	0.79	0.8	0.79	0.8	1,070,000
Multitech Inv. Corp.	0.63	0.63	0.63	0.63	50,000
Music Corp.	0.25	0.26	0.25	0.26	40,000
Uniwide Holdings Inc.	0.11	0.11	0.11	0.11	620,000
MANUFACTURING, DISTRIBUTION & TRADING					
Pryce Corp.	0.085	0.1	0.085	0.1	700,000
Steniel Manufacturing	0.26	0.26	0.26	0.26	100,000
HOTEL, RECREATION & OTHER SERVICE					
Belle Corp.	0.43	0.43	0.43	0.43	210,000
Fairmont Holdings Inc.	0.46	0.5	0.46	0.5	20,000
Mondragon Intl Phils Inc.	0.26	0.26	0.26	0.26	20,000
Philippine Racing Club	6.3	6.5	4.3	6.1	2,700,000
BONDS, PREFERRED & WARRANTS					
ABS-CBN Hldgs. Corp. (Pdr)	31.5	31.5	31	31	116,300
Globe Telecom Hldg (Pdr)	795	800	780	795	19,870
PLDT (10% Pref) Series T	10.25	10.25	10.25	10.25	100
PLDT (10% Pref.) Series U	10.25	10.25	10.25	10.25	1,000
PLDT (10% Pref) Series V	10.25	10.25	10.25	10.25	1,800
PLDT (10% Pref) Series Y	10.25	10.25	10.25	10.25	1,900
PLDT 10% Pref Series Bb	10.5	10.5	10.5	10.5	1,000
Philweb.Com Inc. -Warrants	0.0044	0.0044	0.0044	0.0044	20,000,000
PROPERTY					
Ayala Land Inc.	7.1	7.1	7	7	623,000
C & P Homes Inc.	0.25	0.25	0.25	0.25	1,030,000
Cyber Bay Corp.	0.38	0.38	0.38	0.38	310,000
Empire East Land Inc.	0.26	0.27	0.26	0.26	820,000
Filinvest Land Inc.	2.8	2.85	2.8	2.85	2,734,000
Fil-Estate Land Inc.	0.32	0.33	0.32	0.33	140,000
Robinsons Land Corp.	1.8	1.8	1.8	1.8	40,000
Phil Realty And Holdings	0.05	0.05	0.05	0.05	500,000
SM Development Corp.	1.04	1.04	1.04	1.04	70,000
SM Prime Holdings Inc.	6.1	6.1	6.1	6.1	714,000
Universal Rightfield Prop	0.05	0.05	0.05	0.05	800,000
MINING					
Abra Mining & Industrial	0.0028	0.0028	0.0028	0.0028	8,000,000
Itogon-Suyoc Mines Inc.	0.041	0.041	0.04	0.04	2,500,000
Lepanto Cons Mng. Co. A	0.21	0.21	0.21	0.21	460,000
Omico Corp.	0.004	0.004	0.0038	0.0038	29,000,000
Philex Mining Corp. A	0.24	0.24	0.24	0.24	20,000
OIL					
Oriental Pet. & Min. A	0.0036	0.0036	0.0036	0.0036	31,000,000
Oriental Pet. & Min. B	0.0036	0.0036	0.0036	0.0036	25,000,000
The Philodrill Corp. B	0.15	0.15	0.15	0.15	300,000
Sinophil Corp.	0.055	0.055	0.055	0.055	100,000
Vulcan Ind'l	0.15	0.15	0.14	0.14	320,000

	SHARES	VALUE (P)
Banks & Fin Svc	1,415,150	113,682,075.00
Comm'l & Ind'l	355,490,080	856,921,080.00
PRO	7,781,000	17,321,500.00
Mining	39,980,000	336,200.00
OIL	56,720,000	297,400.00
GRAND TOTALS :	461,386,230	988,558,255.00

AVERAGES		
Banks & Fin Svc	540.42	DOWN 7.86
Comm'l & Ind'l	1,853.02	UP 23.06
PRO	604.81	DOWN 8.10
Mining	1,311.92	DOWN 8.78
OIL	1.31	DOWN 0.01
All Shares Index	756.99	UP 0.64
Composite	1,353.50	UP 2.73

NO. OF ADVANCES: 20; NO. OF DECLINES: 29; NO. OF UNCHANGED: 45; NO. OF TRADED ISSUES: 94; NO. OF TRADES: 1,604

Salcon Power allays fears on sales slump

By Doris C. Dumlao

NEWLY listed Salcon Power Corp. yesterday assured that the suspension of the purchased power adjustment (PPA) collection by the state-owned National Power Corp. would not adversely affect its core power business.

In a disclosure to the Philippine Stock Exchange, SPC senior vice president Alfredo Ballesteros said this would not impinge on its revenues as its billings to the Napocor were fixed for the duration of their rehabilitate- operate-maintain-and-manage agreement (ROMM) up to 2009.

The billings represent fees for generating and exclusively delivering electricity to the Napocor through SPC's flagship Naga power plant complex in Cebu.

"Although a component of the fees charged to Napocor is entitled to a monthly inflationary factor adjustment based on a formula prescribed in the ROMM agreement, we believe that such adjustment does not fall within the context of the PPA in question and could not be unilaterally or arbitrarily suspended," Ballesteros said.

UCPB seeks gov't nod to raise fresh equity

By Elena R. Torrijos

UNITED Coconut Planters Bank has submitted to the Presidential Commission on Good Government a proposed memorandum of agreement to allow the bank to raise P6 billion to P10 billion in fresh capital from new investors.

A source from the PCGG said the commission was now reviewing the draft memorandum agreement, which would require the approval of all contending parties in the sequestration of UCPB.

Foreign investors are reportedly keen on buying into UCPB, and at least three investment banks from the United States and Europe have formally offered to package and underwrite a buy-in deal for the medium-sized universal bank.

Earlier, UCPB chair and president Edward Go said the board's options included fresh government infusion or the novel tier 2 capital route, which allows outside investors to put in new money in the bank without diluting the current ownership structure since the investments are done through special deposit instruments.

The UCPB sequestration issue has been pending in the courts since 1986 and this has prevented UCPB from increasing its capital during the period.

UCPB badly needs a fresh infusion after its capital base fell below the 10-percent capital adequacy ratio set by the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas after it was forced to allocate more money to cover for possible loan losses. UCPB registered the sharpest rise in bad loans among the country's 43 banks in the fourth quarter last year.

BSP Governor Rafael Buenaventura had urged UCPB to boost its capital after the bank's bad loans swelled by P6.25 billion to P20.877 billion in the fourth quarter last year. This jacked up UCPB's non-performing loan ratio to its total loan portfolio to 32.25 percent, up 9.5 percentage points from 22.82 percent in the third quarter.

PHILAM, IMG SIGN DEAL

Philippine American Life and General Insurance Co. (Philamlife), and International Marketing Group Insurance Agency Corp. (IMG) recently signed a memorandum of agreement to appoint IMG as an exclusive general agency of Philamlife. Present during the signing were (from left): IMG president Jose Enrique R. delas Peñas; Philamlife president and CEO Jose L. Cuisia Jr.; EVP and chief agency officer Josefino R. Sto. Domingo, and EVP chief financial officer and chief actuary Reynaldo C. Centeno. Philamlife is affiliated with AIG, the leading US-based international insurance and financial services organization.

T-bill rate rises . . .

From page B1

six-month instruments, the auction committee led by the Bureau of Treasury still accepted P795 million in bids at an average rate of 5.016 percent, up by 24.5 points from the previous week.

A fixed-income trader from a foreign bank pointed out that the Treasury's decision to accept high bids for the six-month notes was an indication that the government was in need of funds.

Only the rate of the one-year treasury fell by 5.4 basis points to 5.186 percent after the Treasury rejected the high bids.

The government raised only P6 billion from the fixed-income market yesterday. Of the total, P3.18 billion came from the sale of 91-day debt papers and P2.02 billion from the auction of one-year notes.

Edeza defended the decision of the Treasury to accept the offers for the 182-day notes yesterday.

"We accepted the same rates for the 182-day as the last week's high bid. The market should not interpret this as a sign that we need the money because we have sufficient funds."

Had the government accepted all offers for the three tenors, the 91-day rate would have moved up by 13.2 points to 4.431 percent, the 182-day would have gone up by 55.1 points to 5.322 percent and the one-year yield would have increased by 30.5 points to 5.495 percent.

The treasurer said the government was prepared to let treasury bill yields move up by 10 to 20 basis points in the future.

But the movement, he said, must be rational and sensible and not based on speculations of the market.

The treasurer warned the market that unreasonably high rates in the coming auctions would be rejected.

Edeza said the government would issue about P9 billion of three-, four- and five-year retail treasury bonds in June.

The funds would help augment the government's cash position to finance the budget in the coming months.

DISCLOSURES

LA TONDEÑA Distillers Inc. bought 13.2 million of its shares at prices ranging from P34 to P35.50 per share.

* * *

LIBERTY Telecoms Inc. moved its annual stockholders' meeting from May 28 to Aug. 30 with record date on Aug. 12. The company also announced the resignation of the following: Edgardo Quiogue as treasurer and CFO, Eduardo Gayanelo as corporate information officer and Nicasio Alcantara as director. Alexander Corpuz replaces Quiogue while Heinz Reyes replaces Gayanelo.

* * *

PNOC Exploration Corp. will hold its annual stockholders' meeting on June 11, 8 a.m. at the PNOC Mini Theater, 7/F Building 6, Energy Center, Taguig. Stockholders as of May 31 are entitled to notice of and to vote at the meeting.

* * *

CORRO Coat Inc. set the record date for its June 10 annual stockholders' meeting on May 24.

* * *

JARDINE Davies Inc. announced that its annual stockholders' meeting that is supposed to be held any day in the month of May will be postponed due to lack of quorum.

Compiled by Maricar D. Tolosa, PDI Research

Montenegro . . .

From page B1

tion and expansion, increased raw material purchases due to higher global demand, additional laboratory equipment for research and development, and total retirement of debt.

Pacco, which has a production capacity of 1,500 metric tons, said the plant modernization would result in a 20-percent increase in efficiency and would decrease unit cost by 10 percent, while additional raw procurement would increase the safety stock inventory of the company to 60 days. Also, additional laboratory equipment for research and development would enable the company to develop higher value activated carbon for the cigarette, water filter and mining industry. Finally, the retirement of loans would enable the company to save approximately P70 million of interest expense a year.

Activated carbon is a form of carbon having very fine pores. It is used chiefly for adsorbing gases or solutes, as in various filter systems for purification, deodorization and decolorization.

Pacco said its activated carbon technology is unique in that it can activate without the use of a burner, thereby saving on fuel.

G & W clubshares
SEC License Broker No.: A-17597
As of May 14, 2002

CLUB	SELLER	BUYER
Alabang Country Club "A"	1,700,000	-
Alabang Country Club "B"	1,800,000	-
Alta Vista	-	300,000
Baguio Country Club	740,000	720,000
Camp John Hay	280,000	280,000
Capitol Hills Golf & CC	130,000	115,000
Canyon Woods	190,000	-
Calatagan Golf Club	100,000	-
City Sports Club	630,000	Pls. Call
Eagleridge "A"	350,000	330,000
Eastridge	200,000	-
Evercrest	100,000	-
Fairways & Blue Waters	500,000	-
Fontana D/C	90,000/140,000	Pls. Call
Forest Hills "A"	230,000	200,000
Forest Hills "C"	250,000	-
Manila Golf	-	11,000,000
Manila Polo	2,800,000	2,700,000
Makati Sports Club	300,000	-
Manila Southwoods A/B	650,000/750,000	-
Metropolitan Club	100,000	-
Mimosa Golf Ind./C3*	390,000/300,000*	-
Mt. Malarayat	350,000	-
Orchard	200,000	-
Phil. Columbian	60,000	-
Punta Fuego	Pls. Call	Pls. Call
Puerto Azul "A"/"B"	120,000/Pls. Call	-
Quezon City Sports Club "A"	240,000	210,000
Riviera Golf "A"/"C"*	100,000/450,000*	-
Riviera Golf "B"	250,000	-
Rockwell	-	350,000
Royale Tagaytay A/C	70,000/140,000	Pls. Call
Sherwoods	110,000	-
Subic Bay Yacht Club "Corp"	400,000	330,000
Subic Golf	180,000	-
Tagaytay Country Club	430,000	400,000
Tagaytay Highlands Golf & CC	850,000	-
Tagaytay Midlands	800,000	750,000
Valley Golf & CC	-	250,000
Valle Verde (Indv.)	160,000	150,000
Wack Wack Golf	7,200,000	6,900,000

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GOLFERS CLUB SHARES, INC.
SEC LICENSE # A 1998-2129
AS OF MAY 13, 2002

	SELLING	BUYING
1. ALABANG COUNTRY CLUB 'A'	1,700,000	1,600,000
2. ALABANG COUNTRY CLUB 'B'	1,750,000	1,700,000
3. BAGUIO COUNTRY CLUB	750,000	650,000
4. CALATAGAN GOLF & COUNTRY CLUB 'A'	100,000	80,000
5. CAMP JOHN HAY	300,000	250,000
6. CANLUBANG GOLF & COUNTRY CLUB	600,000	550,000
7. CAPITOL HILLS GOLF & COUNTRY CLUB	125,000	120,000
8. CELEBRITY CLUB	190,000	175,000
9. COUNTRY CLUB AT TAGAYTAY HIGHLANDS		370,000
10. CLUB FILIPINO	210,000	200,000
11. EASTRIDGE GOLF CLUB 'A'	200,000	
12. EAGLERIDGE GOLF CLUB 'A'	350,000	330,000
13. EVERCREST GOLF CLUB 'A'	100,000	
14. FOREST HILLS GOLF & COUNTRY CLUB 'A'	220,000	200,000
15. FOREST HILLS GOLF & COUNTRY CLUB 'B'	280,000	
16. FOREST HILLS GOLF & COUNTRY CLUB 'C'	500,000	
17. MAKATI SPORTS CLUB 'A'	280,000	250,000
18. MAKATI SPORTS CLUB 'B'	300,000	
19. MANILA GOLF CLUB (IND.)		10,500,000
20. MANILA POLO CLUB	2,800,000	2,650,000
21. MANILA SOUTHWOODS GOLF CLUB 'A'	650,000	620,000
22. MANILA SOUTHWOODS GOLF CLUB 'B'	750,000	700,000
23. METROPOLITAN CLUB 'A'	140,000	
24. METROPOLITAN CLUB 'B'	160,000	
25. MT. MALARAYAT GOLF CLUB (IND.)	350,000	
26. ORCHARD GOLF & COUNTRY CLUB 'A'	230,000	200,000
27. ORCHARD GOLF & COUNTRY CLUB 'B'	250,000	
28. ORCHARD GOLF & COUNTRY CLUB 'C'	370,000	
29. QUEZON CITY SPORTS CLUB	230,000	200,000
30. RIVIERA GOLF & COUNTRY CLUB 'A'	200,000	
31. RIVIERA GOLF & COUNTRY CLUB 'B'	250,000	210,000
32. STA. ELENA GOLF CLUB 'A'	1,800,000	
33. SUBIC BAY YACHT CLUB (IND)	250,000	
34. TAGAYTAY HIGHLANDS INT'L. GOLF CLUB		850,000
35. TAGAYTAY MIDLAND		750,000
36. VALLE VERDE COUNTRY CLUB	170,000	160,000
37. VALLEY GOLF & COUNTRY CLUB		240,000
38. WACK WACK GOLF & COUNTRY CLUB		6,500,000

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Farm production up 3.81% in first quarter

By Christine A. Gaylican

THE AGRICULTURAL sector posted a 3.81-percent growth in production in the first quarter of the year owing largely to bumper harvests in all agriculture sub-sectors, the Department of Agriculture said yesterday.

The first quarter growth in farm production is expected to impact significantly on the country's overall domestic production, which was estimated to increase by 4 to 4.5 percent this year.

The agriculture sector accounts for 21 percent of the total domestic production and a significant 40 percent of the labor force.

The higher growth in the production of palay, mango, banana and coffee more than covered for the decline in the production of coconut and rubber.

Palay production grew by 8.76 percent to 3.06 million metric tons in the first three months of the year.

Agriculture Secretary Leonardo Montemayor said the full year palay production target of 13.3 million to 13.8 million metric tons was still attainable despite the anticipated dry spell that is expected to hit the country in the last quarter of the year.

"The occurrence of El Niño may even be beneficial to our farmers as there will be no rains and floods to damage their crops which will be ready for harvest at this time of the year," Montemayor said in a press conference.

Montemayor said government intervention has been in place in the areas of irrigation and seed distribution.

"We have been preparing for these since last year. The National Irrigation Administration has so far put up irrigation facilities covering 21,000 hectares of farmlands and rehabilitated facilities covering another 148,000 hectares," said Montemayor.

The fishery sector managed to post a 5.15-percent increase in production. Livestock production rose by 3.72 percent in the same period.

Gov't to allow food exporters to import sugar requirement

PROCESSED food exporters may finally get their wish to be allowed to directly import their sugar requirements as the implementing rules and regulations of a presidential order granting them importation rights were recently finalized.

The IRR that will put into effect Presidential Administrative Order 98, issued by former President Joseph Estrada in October 1999, was submitted recently to Trade Secretary Manuel Roxas II, as Export Development Council (EDC) chair, for signature.

"I am confident Secretary Roxas will sign the rule. He knows that the policy decision will boost the drive of food exporters to recover after suffering a steep decline in sales last year," said Sergio R Ortiz-Luis Jr., president of the Philippine Exporters Confederation (Philexport) and vice chair of the EDC.

It will also save the jobs of tens of thousands of workers employed by an industry that had contributed an average of $200 million a year in export revenues until the year 2000, Ortiz-Luis pointed out.

The other week, the Philippine Food Exporters of the Philippines' request for a share in the 40,000 tons of yearly sugar imports allowed under the World Trade Organization's (WTO) minimum access value rule, was turned down by the Sugar Regulatory Administration.

The decision denied the industry access to cheaper and better quality sugar.

Records on the sugar needs of processed food exporters—including those of the makers of fruit juices, dried fruits, purees, condiments and preserved food that use sugar as preservative and additive, showed that they need at least 20,000 metric tons of refined sugar yearly.

The implementing rules were designed and endorsed by the Bureau of Customs, the Philippine International Trading Corp., the Sugar Regulatory Administration and Philexport.

PITC will oversee the order's implementation. It was tasked to put up a special bonded warehouse of imported refined sugar for the exclusive use of accredited and active processed food exporters.

Sugar imports, as raw materials for products that will be for export, will be exempted from import charges under the government's bonded warehousing system, which is made available to all exporters that import their raw materials.

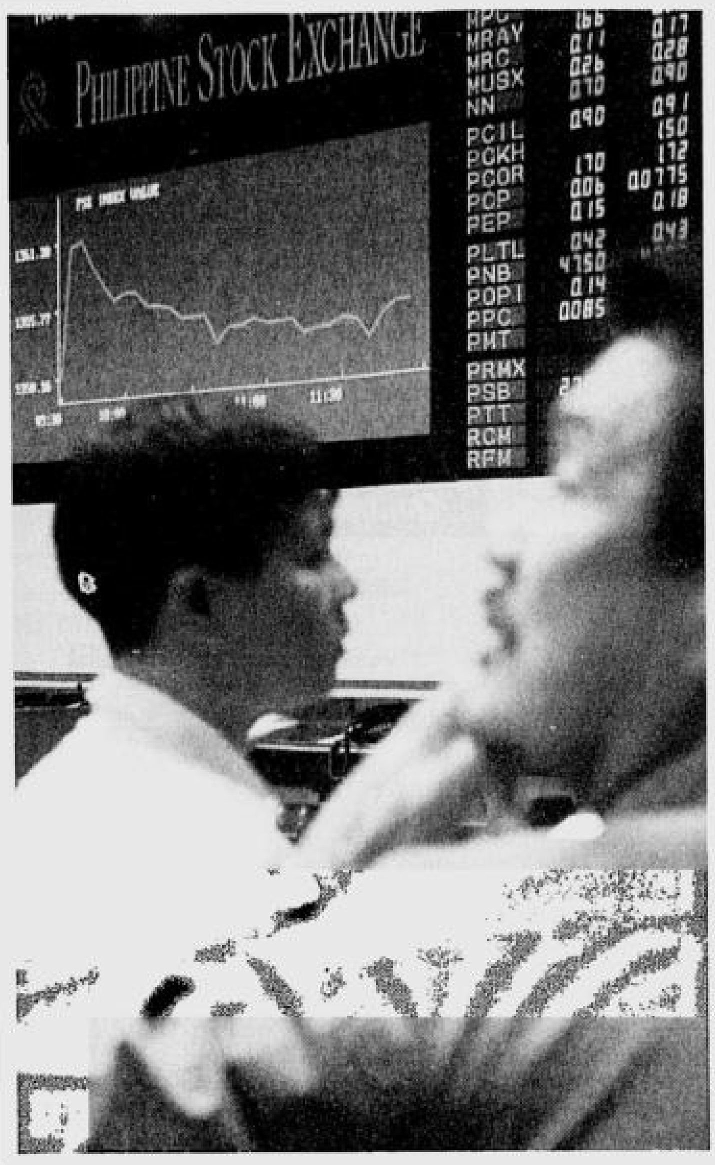
Putting in effect a presidential directive allowing the direct importation of sugar by end-users, when implemented, is expected to be a breakthrough in easing the tight control on sugar importation that resulted in massive smuggling in the past couple of years.

The high price of sugar in the country compared with world market prices, combined with high import taxes on the product, made sugar among the favorite items of smugglers.

In a related development, Ortiz-Luis challenged groups of sugar producers in Mindanao to sell directly to food processors at prices comparative to imported sugar.

Speaking before cooperative leaders under the Philippine Cooperative Center, Ortiz-Luis said, "we do not want to import sugar if we can buy the same item from local producers at world prices. If cooperatives can sell their sugar at competitive prices to mango and pineapple processing industries in Mindanao and Cebu, the latter will surely welcome it."

Ortiz-Luis also offered the cooperatives "contract growing" arrangements between food manufacturing and food exporting enterprises, and sugar producers' cooperatives initially on a pilot basis similar to those initiated recently in the handicrafts industry. *Abe P. Belena, Philexport News and Features*



TRADERS prepare to wrap the day's trading at the Philippine Stock Exchange while the electronic board displays the marginal trend of the composite index. Local share prices rose 0.2 percent in mixed trading amid a lack of strong leads, analysts said. The Philippine Stock Exchange composite index gained 2.73 points to 1,353.50. AFP

GOINGS-ON

Health care for the poor

PHARMACEUTICAL company GlaxoSmithKline (GSK) and the Philippine Health Insurance Corp. (PhilHealth) unveiled a partnership that will provide free health insurance to indigent families.

"Health Pass" is a free health insurance policy that gives indigent families access to health care covering inpatient and outpatient services.

The program, which will be implemented with the support of local government units, will initially cover four areas: Quezon City, Manila, Tacloban, and a yet undetermined area.

GSK vice president for corporate affairs Noel R. Isberto said GSK and PhilHealth would pay for the health policy premiums that would be distributed to some 10,000 families for two years.

In the first year of the program's implementation, GSK will shoulder 50 percent of the premiums while PhilHealth will pay for the remaining 50 percent. In the second year, GSK will shoulder 25 percent of the premiums while PhilHealth will shoulder 50 percent. LGUs will pay for the remaining 25 percent.

Search for outstanding SMEs

THE NOMINATION period for the country's first ever search for Outstanding SME (small and medium enterprise) has been extended until May 30 this year to accommodate applications coming from the regions.

Francisco Floro, chair of the SME Development Council (SMEDC) awards committee, said the extension would allow the council to process more nominations from a pool of eligible SMEs representing the different regions in the country.

"And out of this pool, only six SMEs that have excelled in the different fields of small business development and promotion will receive the top honors."

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Manila Water seeks ₱1 increase in basic rates

By Christine A. Gaylican

THE MANILA Water Co. Inc. is planning a P1-per-cubic-meter increase in its basic rates this July to recover losses related to the peso's depreciation over the last three years.

In petitions sent to the Metropolitan Waterworks and Sewerage System's Regulatory Office, Manila Water, a unit of the Ayala group of companies, said it would be unable to cover up for P300 million worth of currency-related losses over the next two years and might need another year to break even.

An official of the MWSS Regulatory Office said on condition of anonymity that the amount Manila Water was claiming had yet to be verified, but that an adjustment was allowed under recent amendments to the concession agreement between regulators and the Ayala-owned firm.

Manila Water president Antonino Aquino confirmed that his company was seeking a rates hike but assured that the amount was still below the one that its twin concessionaire, Maynilad Water Services Inc., wanted.

Maynilad, which absorbed most of the MWSS' debts when the capital region's water distribution services were privatized, is asking for a P6-per-cubic-meter adjustment effective July.

Manila Water earlier reported raking in some P160 million to P170 million in profits last year, up 38 percent from the previous year.

This was the second consecutive year that Manila Water reported positive earnings despite the peso's steep depreciation against the dollar.

The company, one of two providing water distribution services in Metro Manila, reported an income of P123 million in 2000.

Aquino said the company's earnings were on the back of fiscal prudence and new customers.

The company's capital spending significantly brought down its losses from pilferage and wastage from 63 percent in 1997 to 47 percent as of June this year, Aquino said.

"The reduction in our NRWs (non-revenue water) translated to a steady cash flow base for Manila Water," he said.

Manila Water's outstanding capital stood at around P2.5 billion as of December 2000.

Aquino added that the financial relief given by the government in the form of tariff adjustments in late November enhanced Manila Water's viability and credit standing with its creditors.

Manila Water has secured a $65-million loan from a group of banks to finance its expansion and network rehabilitation program this year.

The company is earmarking some P3 billion to lay down new pipes and other facilities in densely populated urban areas.

The $65-million loan is part of $125 million worth of financing that Manila Water is seeking to secure over the next seven years, according to Manila Water chair and Ayala Corp. vice chair Fernando Zobel de Ayala.

COUNTRY SHARES

As of May 7, 2002

	BUYING	SELLING
ALABANG COUNTRY CLUB A/B*	1.7M *	1,700,000
ALTA VISTA A	300,000	375,000
BAGUIO COUNTRY CLUB	725,000	750,000
CALATAGAN GOLF CLUB A/B*	75,000	95,000/105,000 *
CAMP JOHN HAY	-	280,000
CANLUBANG	900,000	-
CAPITOL HILLS	-	125,000
CELEBRITY SPORTS CLUB	180,000	190,000
EAGLE RIDGE A/B/C**	520,000 **	350,000/450,000/700,000 **
EVERCREST A/B*	135,000 *	100,000
FONTANA D/C/B**	-	90,000/150,000/280,000 **
FOREST HILLS A/B/C**	210,000	230,000/300,000/525,000 **
MAKATI SPORTS A/B*	280,000	270,000/300,000 *
MANILA POLO CLUB (ASAP)	2.75 M	2,900,000
MANILA SOUTHWOODS A/B*	650,000	700,000/700,000 *
METROPOLITAN A/B*	-	120,000/125,000 *
MIMOSA IND /C2*/C3**	120,000/200,000 *	155,000/235,000/350,000 **
MT. MALARAYAT A/C*	-	350,000/625,000 *
ORCHARD A/B/C**	200,000	230,000/380,000/425,000 **
PUERTO AZUL	-	125,000
QUEZON CITY SPORTS CLUB	200,000	225,000
RIVIERA A/B*	-	195,000/400,000 *
ROCKWELL CLUB		475,000
ROYALE TAGAYTAY A/B/C**		90,000/150,000/180,000 **
SHERWOOD HILLS A/B/C**	-	150,000/250,000/350,000 **
STA. ELENA GOLF CLUB A/B*	1.625M/2.1M *	1.75M
SUBIC BAY IND/CORP.*	280,000 *	200,000/300,000 *
TAT FILIPINAS GOLF A/B*	-	350,000/550,000 *
TAGAYTAY HIGHLANDS CC/GOLF*	400,000/850,000 *	425,000/900,000 *
TAGAYTAY MIDLANDS	700,000	750,000
VALLE VERDE IND	150,000	170,000
VALLEY GOLF	230,000	-

Available Lessors for Playing Rights: Alabang, Calatagan, Camp John Hay, Canlubang, Canyon Woods, The Country Club (Free) Celebrity, Eagleridge, Eastridge, Forest Hills, Makati Sports, Malarayat, Orchard, Rivera, Sta. Elena, Southwoods (Free), Tagaytay H-lands & Midlands, Valley Golf, Wack Wack, Rockwell & Others

Need Lessor: Manila Golf (Urgent), Eagleridge B

Selling: Villas, Belleview, Pinecrest & Woodlands in Tagaytay Highlands

Lots: Eagleridge, Forest Hills, Punta Fuego, Royale Tagaytay & Southwoods

Please Call Tel. Nos. 853-1626/27; Globe 0917-8348825 or 0916-8514374

DOE earmarks ₱300M in petroleum retailing loans

By Abigail L. Ho

THE DEPARTMENT of Energy, through the Gasoline Station Training and Loan Fund, will provide some P300 million worth of loans to entrepreneurs interested in putting up petroleum retailing outlets.

Documents from the energy department show that the money will come from the Philippine Amusement and Gaming Corp.

The Downstream Oil Industry Deregulation Act of 1998 provides for the release of some P300 million to help promote retail competition in the oil industry.

Out of this amount, around P282 million is being earmarked for lending and as financial assistance to retailers. The rest will be used to cover for training and administrative expenses.

The money may be lent to individuals, partnerships, cooperatives, associations, nongovernment organizations and corporations interested in setting up and managing gasoline stations and liquefied petroleum gas outlets.

They may borrow up to 50 percent of the total project cost or a maximum of P5 million, with interest charges set at 6 percent.

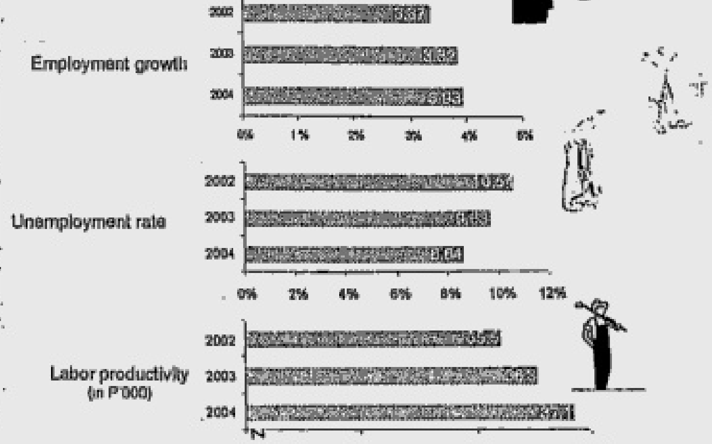
Energy Secretary Vincent Perez Jr. said in a statement yesterday that the energy department was now ready to accept applications for technical and financial assistance from parties interested in putting up gasoline stations.

Joint ventures with newer oil industry players for the supply of petroleum products would be prioritized for the training and loan fund, he said.

INQUIRER MONITOR

Figures that matter in our nation's life

Labor projections* (2002 to 2004)



*Used upper limit of given range of projections

Source: National Economic & Development Authority's Medium Term Development Plan

THE PROJECTED average annual employment growth of 3.2 to 3.5 percent until 2004 translates to about a million additional jobs a year. The full-swing implementation of the Agriculture and Fisheries Modernization Act is seen not only to boost employment in this sector but also to have positive spillover effects in other sectors like retail trade. The number of unemployed is expected to decline from 3.5 million in 2000 to an average of 2.6 to 2.9 million by 2004. Real labor productivity (Real GDP divided by total employed) will steadily rise from P34,780 in 2000 to P36,780 to P37,110 in the same period.

Maricar D. Tolosa, PDI Research

ERC to monitor utilities' compliance with PPA cut

THE ENERGY Regulatory Commission said it would ensure that power distributors, such as Meralco and cooperatives, would pass on to consumers the recent cut in National Power Corp.'s purchased power cost adjustment or PPCA.

Although the reduction in the consumers' electric bills will vary depending on which grid they are connected, the ERC said it would see to it that the cut in Napocor's PPCA would benefit the consumers through the strict monitoring of the distributors' rates.

Meralco consumers connected to Napocor's Luzon grid will enjoy an estimated reduction of 57 centavos per kilowatt-hour, as the company acquires only 50 percent of its power requirement from Napocor.

Customers of electric cooperatives, which are getting 100 percent of their power requirements from Napocor in Luzon, will enjoy a P1.13-per-kwh reduction in their bills.

Consumers connected to the Cebu, Panay and Negros grid will get a 67-centavo-per-kwh cut in their power rates.

Those connected to the Leyte and Samar grid will be paying a 10-centavo-per-kwh purchased power charge adjustment. Mindanao consumers will pay 19 centavos per kwh.

Napocor's move was in line with the directive issued by President Macapagal-Arroyo that pegged the PPCA at 40 centavos per kwh.

"We will give another order to power distributors to explain how they should reflect Napocor's reduced PPA," said ERC chair Fe Barin yesterday in an interview.

Barin noted that ERC would wait for further instructions from Napocor on how these PPCA computations would affect various areas.

According to Barin, Meralco and other local power utilities were also charging their own PPA, which include the cost of power from their own independent power producers, systems losses and subsidies to consumers.

Barin said that ERC was not yet ready with its decision on Meralco's P12.34 billion under recovery of PPA.

Barin said the five-member commission had yet to study the motion for reconsideration filed by Meralco last Thursday. *Christine A. Gaylican*

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INVITATION TO PREQUALIFY AND TO BID

The GOVERNMENT SERVICE INSURANCE SYSTEM invites all interested contractors to pre-qualify and to bid for the CONSTRUCTION of the PROPOSED THREE-STOREY GSIS CEBU BRANCH OFFICE BUILDING within the 4927 square-meter property of the GSIS along Leon Kilat St., Cebu City.

Interested bidders with Philippine Contractors Accreditation Board (PCAB) license of "AAA" for general building and classification of at least Large "A" for building may secure standard Pre-qualification Forms from the Office of the Chief, Administrative Division, GSIS Cebu Branch Office at Room 204 City Savings Bank Building, Osmeña Blvd. cor. P. Burgos St., Cebu City with Tel. No. 256-1356, upon submission of Letter of Intent. Pre-qualification documents must be returned duly accomplished to the same office not later than May 31, 2002.

Pre-qualified bidders shall be informed by mail or fax message of Pre-Bid Conferences and Bid Schedules. All particulars relative to the pre-qualification, bidding and award shall be governed by the Implementing Rules and Regulation of PD 1594, as amended in May 24, and July 5, 2000.

THE GSIS IN-HOUSE BIDDING COMMITTEE RESERVES THE RIGHT TO REJECT ANY OR ALL BIDS, TO WAIVE ANY DEFECTS OR INFORMALITIES OF THE BIDS RECEIVED, TO ACCEPT THE BID MOST ADVANTAGEOUS TO THE GSIS AND DOES NOT GUARANTEE THAT AN AWARD WILL BE MADE. THE DECISION OF THE GSIS IN-HOUSE BIDDING COMMITTEE IN THIS REGARD SHALL BE FINAL AND BINDING.

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(PDI - May 7, 14 & 20, 2002)

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Section I. Invitation for Bids (IFB)

IFB Number : 2002-01-TX
Project Title : Second Social Expenditures Management Project and Third Elementary Education Project
Contract Title : Supply and Delivery of Textbooks and Teacher's Manuals for Public Elementary and High Schools in the Philippines

1. The Government of the Philippines has applied for a loan from the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development towards the cost of Second Social Expenditure Management Project and also received a loan for the Third Elementary Education Project (TEEP) and it intends to apply part of the proceeds of these loans to payments under the contract for which this invitation is issued.
2. The Department of Education (DepEd) now invites sealed bids from eligible bidders for the supply and delivery of about 28 million copies of textbooks and teacher's manuals for the following levels and subject areas:

Levels	Subject Areas
Elementary Grades 1 to 6	English, Math and Filipino
Elementary Grades 4 to 6	Science
High School Years I and II	Filipino
High School Years II to IV	Science
High School Year III	English
High School Years III and IV	Araling Panlipunan

3. Bidding will be conducted through the international competitive bidding procedures specified in the World Bank's Guidelines Procurement under IBRD Loans and IDA Credits, January 1995 (revised January and August 1996 and September 1997 and January 1999) and is open to all bidders from eligible source countries as defined in the guidelines. The bidding and issuance of awards shall be conducted by the DepEd Central Office.
4. Interested eligible bidders may obtain furhter information from the Department of Education (DepEd) and inspect the bidding documents at the address below from 0900 to 1700 hrs starting May 15, 2002. DepEd will grant a margin of preference to textbooks and teacher's manuals manufactured in the Philippines.
5 A complete set of bidding documents in English language may be purchased by interested bidders starting May 15, 2002 upon submission of a written application to the address below and upon payment of a non-refundable fee in the amount of TWO THOUSAND PESOS (P2,000.00) in the form of cashier's check, manager's check or cash.
6 Bids must be delivered to the address below by 1000 hrs on June 27, 2002. All bids must be accompanied by a bid security of not less than 2.5% of the bid amount, expressed in any freely convertible currency. Late bids will be rejected. Bids will be opened in the presence of bidder's representatives who choose to attend at the address below at 1000 hrs. on June 27, 2002.
7 Prior to bid opening, a pre-bid conference will be held on June 13, 2002 at 1400 hrs. to 1600 hrs. at the address indicated below.
8. DepEd-BAC reserves the right to reject any or all bids and to waive any informality therein and to award the bid items to one or more bidders.

(Sgd.) Undersecretary Ernesto S. Pangan
Chairperson, Bids and Awards Committee
Ground Floor, DepEd Complex Bldg.
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(PDI - May 14 & 22, 2002)

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LEGAL NOTICE

Notice is hereby given that the estate of the late ANTONIO L. JAVELLANA was extrajudicially settled among his heirs as per deed of Extrajudicial settlement (Doc. No. 325, Page No. 63, Book No. II, Series of 2001 of the notarial register of Notary Public Agustin Q. Javellana of Quezon City, Metro Manila) and Supplemental Extrajudicial Settlement (Doc. No. 348, Page No. 68, Book No. II, Series of 2002 of the notarial register of Notary Public Agustin Q. Javellana of Quezon City, Metro Manila).
(PDI-April 30,May 7&14,2002)

PUBLIC NOTICES

NOTICE OF LOSS

Notice is hereby given that AYALA CORP CERT. Nos. 3077, 14738, 27410, 7214695, 7223807, 7216327 issued to Maria Catherine T. Corda & Dannel R. Alejandrino have been lost. If no contest received new certificate will be issued.
(PDI-May 14, 21 & 28, 2002)

PERSONAL

PRAYER TO ST. JOSEPH

Oh, St. Joseph, whose protection is so great, so strong, so prompt before the throne of God. I place in you all my interest and desires. Oh, St. Joseph, do assist me by your powerful intercession, and obtain for me from your divine son all spiritual blessings, through Jesus Christ, our Lord. So that, having engaged here below your heavenly power, I may offer my thanksgiving and homage to the most loving of fathers. Oh, St. Joseph, I never weary contemplating you, and Jesus asleep in your arms; I dare not approach while He reposes near your heart. Press Him in my name and kiss His fine head for me and ask Him to return the Kiss when I draw my dying breath. St. Joseph, Patron of departing souls - Pray for me.

This prayer was found in the fiftieth year of Our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. In 1505 it was sent from the Pope to Emperor Charles when he was going into battle. Whoever shall read this prayer or hear it or keep it about themselves, shall never die a sudden death, or be drowned, nor shall poison take effect on them; neither shall they fall into the hands of the enemy, or shall be burned in any fire or shall be overpowered in battle.

Say for nine mornings for anything you may desire. It has never been known to fail so be sure you really want what you ask.

Asian economic integration hits speed bump

SHANGHAI, China—Asia's ambitious drive for economic integration, launched amid great fanfare just two years ago, is running into the sand.

Officials said an ingrained wariness of nosy neighbors is hampering the development of an information-sharing and economic-monitoring network needed to underpin an embryonic web of central bank swap agreements designed to avert a rerun of the financial crisis that devastated Asia in 1997.

A weekend meeting of finance ministers from the 10-member Association of South East Asian nations plus Japan, China and Korea (Asean+3) produced a pledge of more cooperation but a conspicuous absence of firm new undertakings.

"I'm a little disappointed with the slow progress of regional integration but some members said they would feel dizzy if it went too fast," Tae-Shin Kwon, a senior South Korean finance ministry official, told Reuters.

Japanese officials would also have liked the meeting, held on the sidelines of the Asian Development Bank's annual conference in Shanghai, to have yielded more.

"We're making progress step by step. But each country has its hidden agenda so it's hard to reach consensus," he said.

The idea for a network of central bank swaps was hatched at the ADB meeting in Chiang Mai in 2000, when the wounds inflicted by the 1997 crisis were still war.

Two years on, the pain is fading, and with it the urgency to put in place institutional mechanisms that would be vital in the event of another financial crunch.

A communiqué issued by Asean+3 ministers highlighted the absence of a common political will by listing only seven countries as being willing to share crucial data on short-term capital flows—Asia's undoing in the 1997 crisis.

The seven are Brunei, Indonesia, Japan, Korea, the Philippines, Thailand and Vietnam.

The six hold-outs are Singapore, Malaysia, China, Laos, Myanmar and Cambodia.

Sources from several countries said that, of the six absentees, Singapore was especially reluctant to exchange data. Singaporean officials in Shanghai could not be reached for comment.

Some Asian officials also expressed concern that China was unwilling to join in, given the large and growing flow of capital in and out of the country.

Officials have always stressed that regional integration would be a laborious effort given Asia's wide range of economic, political, religious and cultural backgrounds.

Historical antagonisms are never far from the surface either.

Chinese Finance Minister Xiang Huaicheng said Sunday that a recent visit by Japanese Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi to a controversial shrine honoring some World War II heroes had damaged political relations between Asia's two biggest economies. *Reuters*

Mitsubishi nets first earnings in three years

TOKYO—Japan's Mitsubishi Motors Corp. said Monday that it achieved its first profit in three years in the 12 months to March, when the fruits of restructuring and a weak yen offset slack demand.

Japan's No. 4 automaker earned a net profit of 11.3 billion yen ($85.6 million), reversing a net loss of 278.1 billion yen a year earlier.

But Mitsubishi Motors, 37.3 percent owned by German-US automaker DaimlerChrysler AG, said the road ahead remained rocky, with demand for cars in Japan still flagging amid the prolonged economic slump.

"The result shows the speed of our restructuring, but it is only a first step," said chief operating officer Rolf Eckrodt in a statement.

"We will now move steadily from cost reduction and process optimization into further business consolidation and profitable growth in the years to come," the former DaimlerChrysler executive said. *AFP*

Toyota unveils best-ever income on weak yen

TOKYO—Toyota Motor Corp. unveiled Monday its best-ever results in the year to March as a weak yen, tough cost-cutting and strong sales powered Japan's top automaker through the global economic slump.

The firm said it hoped to do even better this year despite harsh operating conditions.

Its group net profit to March jumped 30.7 percent to 615.8 billion yen ($4.6 billion) from a year earlier, while pre-tax profit rose 14.5 percent to 1.11 trillion yen, a record for any Japanese firm.

"The main reason for our record profit is we posted strong sales worldwide including Japan, Europe and the United States," senior managing director Takashi Kamio told a news conference.

"Despite the Sept. 11 (terrorist attacks), we worked very hard and aimed to achieve 1 trillion yen in pre-tax profit. We are really glad we achieved this goal," he said.

Toyota's revenue rose 12.5 percent to a record 15.1 trillion yen. *AFP*

A SALES representative arranges the merchandise of the Manchester United franchise store at a shopping mall in Singapore. A newly formed Singapore company, Manchester United Food and Beverage Concepts, believes its plan to open a chain of family restaurants across the region themed after the world's most famous soccer club will be a resounding success. AFP

Business confidence reaches 8-yr high in Australia

SYDNEY—Business confidence in Australia is at its highest in eight years, according to a study released here Monday that showed conditions were consistent with economic growth of around 4.5 percent.

The National Australia Bank survey for April also showed signs of a wage-based increase in inflation but pointed to a strong outlook for the domestic economy with business confidence at its highest level since 1994.

"That, in turn, has seen business move to increase employment and also gives further confidence to the widespread expectation that a broad based pick-up in business investment will begin soon," said NAB chief economist Alan Oster.

The NAB business confidence index in April rose to 20.61 points in April from 14.82 points in March, while the business conditions index rose to eight points from five points.

A survey by economic forecasters Dun and Bradstreet, released simultaneously, showed business expectations for growth in inventories at the highest level in 14 years.

According to the NAB survey, the sectors with the strongest business activity included transport and construction as well as recreation and personal services, which rose to their highest levels since the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks.

The bank also noted the first signs of inflationary pressures beginning to emerge in wages.

"While price pressures remain subdued, for the first time there appears to be some initial evidence of a broad-based increase in wages," Oster said.

"While not too much emphasis should be placed on one month's figures, clearly the situation needs to be closely watched."

The survey showed aggregate wage costs rose 1.4 percent in April after a 0.6-percent rise in March.

The bank said it would retain its forecast of a 3.75-percent economic growth for the fiscal year to June 2003 and an expansion of around 4 percent over calendar 2003.

As well, it expected interest rates to continue to rise following the central bank decision to increase rates by a quarter percentage point to 4.5 percent, and at a more rapid rate than was initially expected.

If economic growth exceeded the bank's expectations, rates could climb even higher, it warned.

"While we still expect the cash rate to reach 5.25 percent, our judgment is that the RBA will get there much earlier than previously forecast," he said.

"Indeed, we now expect those levels to be reached before year's end. If growth exceeds our expectations, official rates could well go higher."

The Dun and Bradstreet survey also noted a strong increase in sales expectations but warned that further interest rate hikes could have a negative impact on that growth rate.

"Further interest rate rises in 2002 could see businesses start to ease off on potential investment and growth opportunities," Dun and Bradstreet chief executive for Australia and New Zealand, Christine Christian, said. *AFP*

Kepco says net profit up 91% in first quarter

SEOUL—Korea Electric Power Corp. said Monday that its net profit surged 91 percent in the three months to March compared with a year earlier because of lower foreign exchange-related losses.

Despite the near-doubling of net profit to 782.4 billion won ($614 million), sales rose only modestly to 5 trillion won from 4.81 trillion won, a Kepco official said, adding details would be disclosed later.

Kepco's net profit in 2001 shrank slightly to 1.78 trillion won from 1.79 trillion won in the previous year.

It was not immediately clear if the results included income from five thermal power operations, which the government separated from Kepco in April last year for sale to foreign firms. The state utility still controls power transmission, distribution and nuclear power operations.

But the proposed sale, pushed by the government as part of efforts to sell off major state assets, sparked a 38-day strike that ended on April 4 after Kepco's management and union worked out a vague accord on privatization. *AFP*

P&G recovery reaches top 20 countries

CINCINNATI—The Procter & Gamble Co. is earning money again in its top 20 nations, driven by a recovery in Western Europe and strong growth in Russia and China, its top international marketing executive said.

P&G has "pretty much eliminated those hot spots where we were losing money," said Kelly Clark, head of the company's global market development and business operations.

But operations in Japan and Germany, while profitable, are below the company's expectations, Clark said on Sunday.

P&G chief executive AG Lafley has said that market development groups, which put a manager in every nation, are the part of P&G's restructuring with the greatest potential to cut costs and spark growth.

He said by mid-2003, the company's seven-market development organizations would complete a downsizing that already was mostly done in North America. *AP*

CASIO
EXILIM

AN employee of Japan's Casio Computer Co. Ltd. pulls out a new digital still camera dubbed "Exilim" from his pocket. Casio will put the world's thinnest card-size camera on the domestic market from June 21 at an estimated price of 45,000 yen ($350). AFP

Some keeping an eye open in sleepy merger world

NEW YORK—While US corporate mergers are in the doldrums, a recent study suggests that some investors are quietly trolling for bargains.

Financial buyers, which acquire companies hoping to manage them better and sell them at a profit, comprised 11.3 percent of the deals announced in the first quarter compared with 8.6 percent a year ago, according to a report slated for release on Monday by Ernst & Young National Office West. The overall number of financial deals is even from last year.

The number of strategic deals, in which companies combine to try to make more money together than they would separately, has declined.

"Strategic buyers have stepped back from the transaction market and are seemingly content to stay on the sidelines until this wave of economic uncertainty passes," according to an advance copy of the study made available to Reuters. "On the other hand, financial buyers appear to be the 'opportunists' of this transaction market."

The merger market remains bleak, nonetheless. Ernst & Young, which last year opened its own merger advisory business, sees a continued short-term trend of fewer deals for less money. That outlook is pervasive on Wall Street.

Strategic and financial buyers alike have been impeded by accounting scandals, which have cast doubt on financial information; increased valuation disagreements amid the uncertain economy; and extremely tight credit markets.

The relative strength seen by financial buyers is evidenced by their involvement in the same number of deals—194—in first quarter 2002 as they were in first quarter 2001, after falling to 151 deals in third quarter 2001.

Still, the value of first-quarter deals involving financial buyers fell 55 percent to $5.2 billion from $11.6 billion the year before, according to Ernst & Young's research.

Private equity funds have raised billions of dollars over the past few years, but have been unable to find enough worthwhile places to invest the money. Some have been forced to return cash to investors.

Strategic buyers were involved in 1,531 deals in the first quarter, down about 26 percent from 2,056 in the year-ago period. The value of those deals dropped 52 percent to $70.0 billion from $145.2 billion. *Reuters*

GPRS: Flop or kingdom come for telecom sector?

HELSINKI—As sales of mobile phones dwindle across Europe, Nokia and other struggling telecom groups are pinning their hopes for a recovery on new technology now hitting the market featuring high-speed wireless Internet connections and multimedia messaging services incorporating sound and photos.

The newest fad in mobile phones, called GPRS (general packet radio services), is intended to bridge the gap between the current generation of GSM mobile phone services and the next generation, called third-generation or 3G.

"This year will see the arrival of a number of new exciting products and services," Nokia chief executive Jorma Ollila said as he presented Nokia's annual earnings report in January, holding up GPRS handsets with radios, digital cameras and music players.

All of the big mobile phone makers—Sony-Ericsson, Siemens, Motorola and Nokia—have already launched their first GPRS phones on the market, though more affordable handsets with additional features are expected this autumn.

But whether the new technology will be the success Ollila and the rest of the telecom sector hope for remains to be seen.

On Nokia's home turf, many tech-savvy Finns remain skeptical.

"GPRS will be a flop, just like WAP (wireless application protocol)," said a senior Finnish government official who asked to remain anonymous but who carries no less than two Nokia handsets on him at any given time.

"We won't bother with it, we'll go straight to 3G instead," he added.

3G was initially meant to have been launched in Europe by now, but it has been repeatedly delayed and is now forecast to hit the market sometime in 2004 or 2005.

With the launch as elusive as ever, many think GPRS will meet many of 3G's expectations.

While 3G's super-fast wireless Internet connection allows users to watch live video, GPRS, which builds on WAP technology, offers mobile Internet, e-mail and multimedia messaging (MMS), incorporating sound and still images.

"With services like mobile email and Internet surfing, whenever and wherever you are, you can really do an ad-hoc organization of your day, you can basically there and then make the decision how to proceed and who to contact," said Raimo Kantola, a telecommunications professor at the Helsinki University of Technology. *AFP*

NOTICE TO THE PUBLIC

This is to inform the public that the following people whose pictures appear herein are no longer connected with **INDUSTRIAL GALVANIZERS CORPORATION OF THE PHILIPPINES** as indicated. Any transaction entered into with the following people will not be honored by IGCP.

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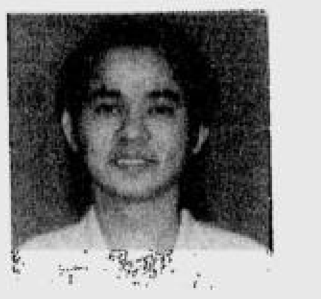

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Name: **MELVILLE LEYSON**
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Name: **TOLOMEO REYES JR.**
Eff. Date of Separation: March 8, 2002

Name: **QUIRINO HERMOSILLA**
Eff. Date of Separation: March 13,2002

Name: **EDWIN EBCAS**
Eff. Date of Separation: May 2, 2002

(PDI - May 12 & 14, 2002)

Republic of the Philippines
PROVINCE OF CAGAYAN
Tuguegarao City

OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

INVITATION TO PRE-QUALIFY AND TO BID

The Provincial Government of Cagayan, through the Provincial Bids and Awards Committee, invites all interested parties to prequalify and to submit bid proposals for the supply and delivery of fifteen (15) units different kinds of vehicle to the Provincial Government of Cagayan, intended for CAR ACQUISITION PLAN.

ITEM NO.	QTY.	UNIT	PARTICULAR/MODEL
1.	-4-	unit	TOYOTA VAN HI-ACE GRANDIA (MODEL 1998 or later)
2.	-1-	unit	TOYOTA VAN (latest model/4x4)
3.	-1-	unit	HYUNDAI STAREX (MODEL 1999-2000)
4.	-4-	unit	TOYOTA PICK-UP (Model 1998 or later)
5.	-1-	unit	ISUZU PICK-UP (FUEGO) Model 1998 or later
6.	-1-	unit	NISSAN PICK-UP (FRONTIER) Model 1998 or later
7.	-1-	unit	TOYOTA PICK-UP, SURPLUS (IMPORTED 1992)
8.	-1-	unit	NISSAN TERRANO (4X4) EXECUTIVE SERIES 1998 or later
9.	-1-	unit	TOYOTA REVO DLX GAS (1999 Model, second hand, color green)

Specification and bid forms may be secured from the General Services Office, Capitol Hills, Tuguegarao City, Cagayan, from **May 15 to 21, 2002**, upon payment of a non-refundable deposit of Five Hundred Pesos (P500.00).

Interested bidders should be pre-qualified. A pre-bid meeting will be held at **9:30 AM** at the Governor's Office Conference Room, Tuguegarao City, Cagayan to thresh out some important aspects of the bidding.

Sealed bid proposals must be submitted to the Provincial Bids and Awards Committee not later than **9:30 AM** on **May 28** and publicly opened at **9:30 AM.** At the same date and address.

The Provincial Government reserves the right to reject any and/or all bids, waive any defects or formalities therein and accept the offer most advantageous to the Provincial Government.

(Sgd.) **EDGAR RAMONES LARA**
Governor
Chairman, Provincial Committee on Bids & Awards

(PDI -- May 14, 15 & 16, 2002)

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INQUIRER TRiViA

By BONG BARRAMEDA

Universal appeal

Q. Who was the first Filipino to compete in the Miss Universe pageant?

A. Teresita Sanchez, a brown-haired, brown-eyed Bulakeña, who was crowned Miss Philippines in 1952. Sanchez, then a UST medical student, represented the country in the first Miss Universe pageant, held in Long Beach, California, that same year. She did not place.

For the Record. When she became the first Filipino to win an international beauty title in 1965 as Miss International, statuesque Gemma Cruz measured 37"-27"-37". Gloria Diaz, on the other hand, measured 34"-24"-34" when crowned Miss Universe in 1969.

Classified Odd. The human with the largest waist on record was Walter Hudson (1944-91) of New York – his waist stretched the tape all the way to 119" at his peak weight of 1,197 lbs. For normally built humans, the smallest ever measured was a 13" – waist (reduced from a natural 22") that belonged to Mrs. Ethel Granger (1905-82) of Peterborough, Britain.

WORD WATCH

Capitulate (kuh pich yoo layt) : to give up (to an enemy) on certain conditions.

PDI -- May 14, 2002

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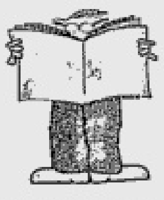

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OBITUARIES

CARD OF THANKS

The family and relatives of the late

JOSE ROCES LEGARDA

who peacefully joined his Creator on April 21, 2002

acknowledge with grateful appreciation the many kind expressions of sympathy extended to them in their hour of bereavement.

ANTONIO T. MONCUPA, SR.

of Dinalupihan, Bataan

Peacefully joined his Creator on May 12, 2002 at the age of 73.

His family requests the pious readers to pray for the eternal repose of his soul.

His remains lie in state at their residence at 45 Zamora Street, Dinalupihan, Bataan.

Instead of May 15 interment, new schedule is on Friday, May 17, 2002, after the 7:30 a.m. Mass.

Our Dearly Beloved Papang

JUANITO R. DAVID, SR.

Peacefully joined Mamang (Rody G. David) to be with our Lord on 12 May 2002 at the age of 74.

His loving children **Esmie, Jun, Sonia, Sheila, Jaime, Stella, Joel** and **Sara**; sisters **Virginia** and **Susan**; grandchildren, sons and daughters-in-law request the pious readers to pray for the eternal repose of his soul.

His body now lies in state at #6 Road 3 GSIS Hills, Talipapa, Novaliches, Caloocan City.

Interment will be on 16 May 2002, Thursday at Himlayang Pilipino, Tandang Sora, Quezon City after the 2:00 p.m. Mass.

CRISPIN ESPERANZA

Passed away on May 10, 2002.

He is survived by his wife **Felipa**; sons **Boy, Nelson** and **Gerry**; and daughters **Esterlyn** and **Ning-Ning**.

His body lies in state at the family residence in Luisiana, Laguna.

Interment is scheduled for today, May 14, 2002.

> "...absent with the body to be present with the Lord" 2 Corinthians 5:8

For the needs of your departed Loved Ones, the following establishments can help you.

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Solving home financing woe through securitization

By Florentino S. Dulalia Jr.
Contributor

SECURITIZATION may well be the long-awaited solution to the problem of financing the country's housing program.

Essentially, securitization means using future money today. Represented by a document and backed up with a financial asset like the title of a house, this money enables the government to finance priority projects like housing. The document or paper may be in the form of an interest-bearing treasury bill, treasury note or bond with certain period of maturity.

It is of interest to note that in the United States, the bond industry was flourishing in recent years. There was a time when daily trading volume in government bonds alone was over $100 billion. The managing director of Fitch Investor Services Inc. even described the bond market as "an invisible giant and the stock market as a visible dwarf by comparison."

Generally considered as safe investments, government securities are tools for economic growth. The government's future income is sold, with the cash spent today for economic recovery and housing projects.

Securitization involves three major players—the originator, the Special Purpose Vehicle (SPV) and the investor. The originator sells the future payments for the loan to an SPV. This asset then becomes a securitized instrument which the SPV circulates among the investing public or capital markets.

Securitizing loan receivables could indeed be the key solution to our financial problems. Consider this: the Social Security System alone has loan receivables of P3.5-billion individual housing loans and P36-billion national housing loans. Pag-Ibig Housing, on the other hand, has securitized P630 million of its loan receivables.

An enhanced securitization program is one of the major components of Shelter Finance, a key feature of the Omnibus Housing and Urban Development Act now pending in the lower House. Loans and mortgages generated under the Centralized Homebuyer Financing Program (CHFP) will be securitized and offered to the secondary capital markets in the form of housing bonds or securities. This will ensure the continuous recycling of the initial CHFP Fund. With wise and prudent management, the Fund is expected to generate at least P75 to P80 billion yearly. The proposed securitization enhancement measures will make housing bonds highly competitive in the capital markets.

(Dulalia is the president of the Chamber of Real Estate and Builders' Associations Inc.)

Thames Business School opens in June

EASTWOOD CyberPark Corp. has announced the entry of Thames International Business School in Eastwood City CyberPark, the country's premier information technology (IT) park in Quezon City.

Eastwood CyberPark vice president Jericho Go said the entry of Thames further boosts the CyberPark's stock as the country's premier IT park. "The entry of a world-class learning institution like Thames is a testimony to the first-rate facilities and the business-friendly environment at the CyberPark," added Go.

In fact, Thames will become the first academic institution to run classes in Eastwood come June. It will be located at the International Centre for Information Technology Education (ICITE), the umbrella education center at the CyberPark.

With Eastwood CyberPark is already playing host to some of the biggest companies in the world, like IBM and Citibank, Thames students will be in an environment where professionals meet and interact.

The new campus facility will provide Thames students with a fresh new learning atmosphere and first-class facilities both inside and outside the classrooms. The 500-seat ICITE auditorium will also provide the Thames community with a venue for its workshops, seminars and plays.

ELEGANCE NEED NOT BE EXPENSIVE!
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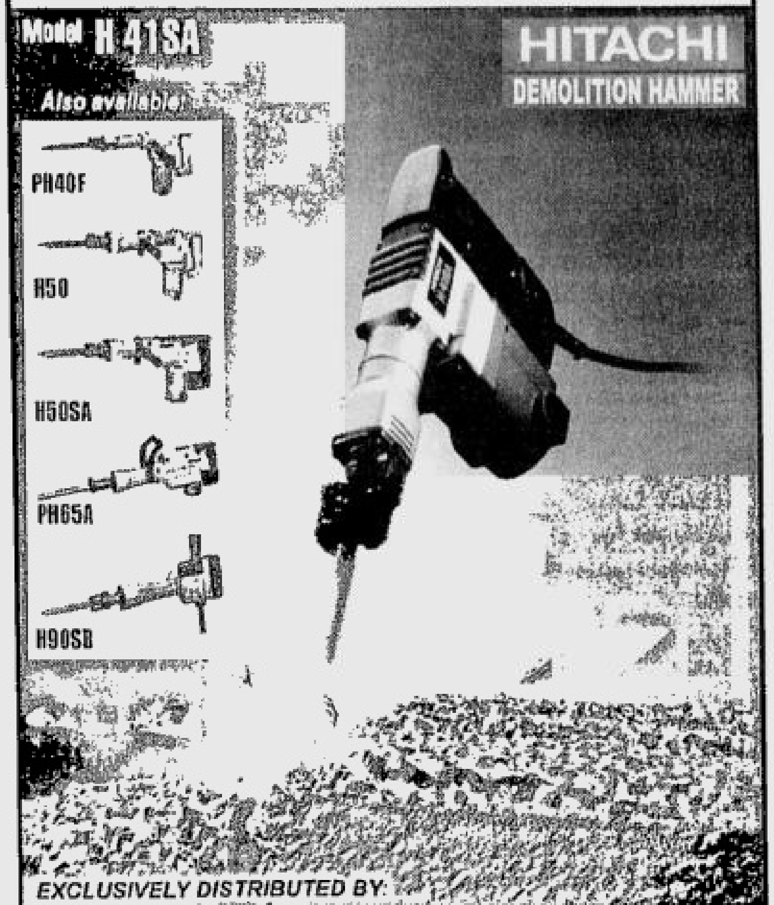

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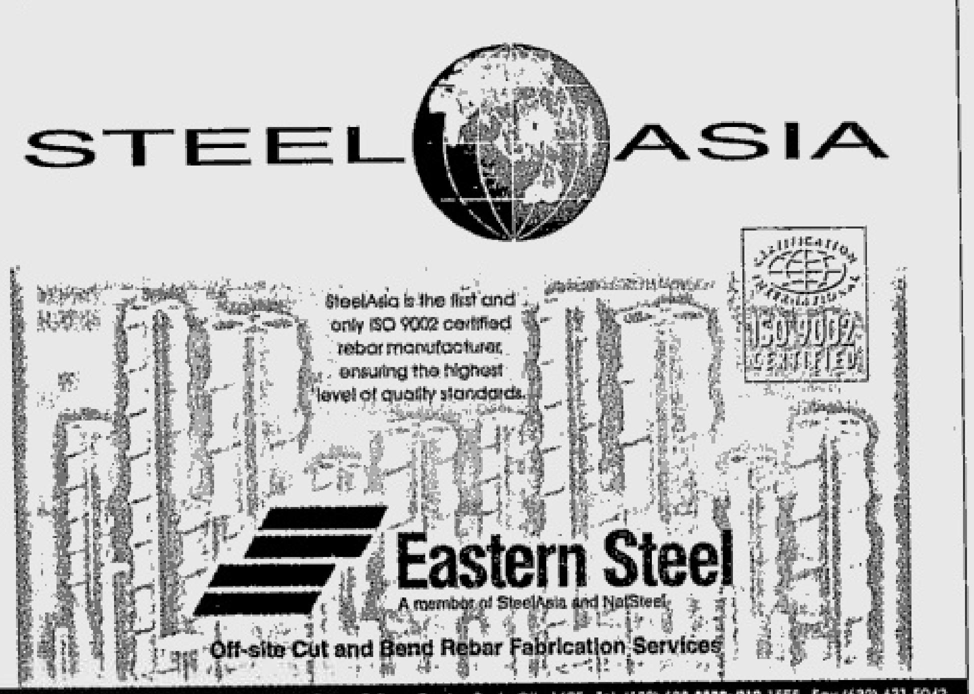
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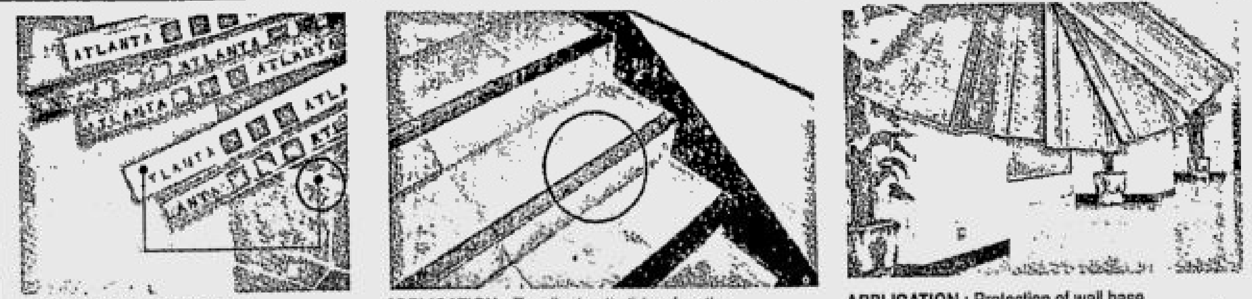

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RP ready to become 'call center capital'

By Tessa R. Salazar

EMERGING new urban centers with extensive residential, retail and commercial support facilities, IT-friendly buildings inside and outside the traditional commercial business districts, competitive labor costs and the slump in property sector demand make the Philippines the location for call center operations.

So what more could multinational firms—shopping for possible locations of their call centers—ask for?

The demand for call centers worldwide has spawned more call center offices in the country and could fill the void that oversupply of offices in the real estate industry has left, said FPDSavills Philippines Inc. associate director Benedict Miranda.

Supply imbalance

FPDSavills Philippines Research Inc. stated in its recent Contact Center Paper that over the next 12 to 18 months, the supply side of the office sector would remain critical while demand would remain weak. It further said the flat corporate demand for office space will continue to exert downward pressure on prices and rents. The supply imbalance would be compounded by the completion of commercial projects in existing and emerging urban developments, such as the information technology parks that would keep values low in the main business districts.

The scenario, said FPDSavills research analysts, is likely to create a favorable environment for IT-enabled service outsourcing firms to establish facilities in the country as rental values are expected to fall further.

"An abundance of supply coupled with depressed demand presents a golden opportunity to prospective tenants, as increased competition among landlords, not just in the major CBDs but also in non-traditional urban areas, is expected to heighten," said the report.

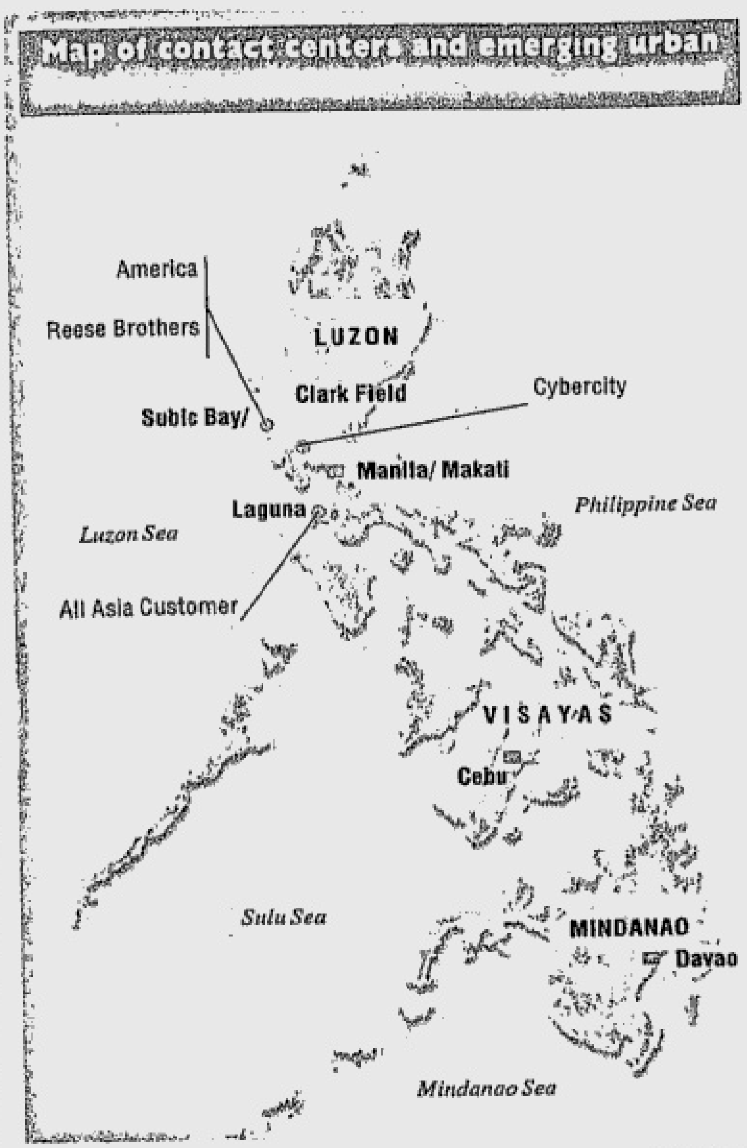
The Philippines will likely pick up what India is leaving behind. India, the second most populous country in the world, is now moving toward more high-technology services. "As India moves away from mass-based, low-value office support services toward higher-end services such as system integration and software development, the Philippines is expected to fill the vacuum left behind," said the report.

Call centers

Call center offices are often located in the Makati and Ortigas central business districts where various retail and commercial establishments are located.

A call center is a physical location, as defined by Call Center News Service, where calls are placed, or received, in high volume for sales, marketing, customer service, telemarketing, technical support or other specialized business activities. A call center allots between 15 and 30 seats for call center operators, while micro centers employ only four to five people. A call center's main components include computers with telephone sets or headsets hooked into a large telecom switch, and one or more supervisor stations. Call centers run on a 24-hour, seven-day-a-week basis.

Call centers take product orders, reservations and complaints, or provide directory assistance for customers. Contact centers, meanwhile, are enhanced versions that offer more advanced technology using interactive customer support. They offer solutions for business, and customer problems as well.



INQMAP/ ESambo

Employing a software called Customer Relationship Management, the process of answering customers in a call center involves the transfer of calls or queries from head offices in countries like the United States or in Europe to contact centers in the Philippines.

Growth areas

Though the high concentration of contact center operators are in Makati and Ortigas, FPDSavills noted that in the last few years, several locations in the country have become contact centers. It noted that at present there are about 25 contact centers operating in the country, such as those in Eastwood Cyber Park in Quezon City, the E-Square Park in Fort Bonifacio, Laguna in the Calabarzon growth corridor, Clark Field in Pampanga, and some areas in Cebu and Davao cities.

FPDSavills also cited that an important factor for companies setting up contact centers is the presence of nearby residential developments, retail and commercial developments and emerging urban centers. The high-end residential condominiums in Eastwood Cybercity such as Laffayette, Olympic Heights and One Orchard Road as well as high and low-end residential subdivisions in the area encourage the growth of contact centers.

The Makati and Ortigas CBDs teem with retail and commercial establishments. Glorietta Center, Greenbelt Park, SM Megamall (thus far the largest shopping mall in Asia) and Shangri-La Plaza mall are just some of the most recognizable places in Metro Manila.

Other possible investment destinations are Clark Air Base and Subic Naval Base because a modern international airport supports the operation of Clark Development Corp., while Subic Bay Metropolitan Authority is the ideal location for logistic operations because of its seaport and airport. America Online and CyberCity Teleservices are located in these areas.

The Calabarzon (Cavite, Laguna, Batangas, Rizal, Quezon) area is likewise ideal because various ecozones and industrial centers have been set up here. The All Asia Customer Services Inc. and Light and Industry Science Park are located here.

Cebu and Davao are ideal locations also, with modern transportation and infrastructure facilities constructed with the influx of trade and commerce in these regions. NEC Telecom Software Philippines has set up a software development support in Cebu for NEC networks around the world.

FPDSavills, in its latest paper on contact centers, described the most common customer touch points: voice calls, e-mail, live chat, fax and Internet voice transmission. After receiving calls from customer touch points, they are routed to the Philippines through dedicated fiber optics, redundant transmission and toll quality transmission.

Competitive advantage

The FPDSavills report also cited other factors that could spell the country's competitive advantage. These are the number of IT graduates in the country as well as the educational institutions offering ICT-related courses.

The Philippines' IT graduates in 1996 grew to 19,494 compared with only 4,161 in 1991. Engineering and technology enrolment is expected to reach more than 350,000 by school year 2004 to 2005, while math and computer science enrolment in 2004-2005 could reach 300,000. The Commission on Higher Education estimates that a total of 643 institutions are offering ICT-related courses while the National Capital Region has a total of 121 ICT schools.

The report also cited that the average hourly wage rate of contact center employees in the country which is only about 12 percent of the US wage rate.

FPDSavills stressed that "this is even lower than the hourly rate in India, which is approximately 15 percent of the US wage rate according to Trammwell Crow Company."

The Macapagal administration's support to the development of the IT sector is also important, said the report. The Department of Trade and Industry's favorable policies geared toward attracting overseas IT investment and the E-commerce Act that would make the Philippines an IT center in Asia could also spell the difference.

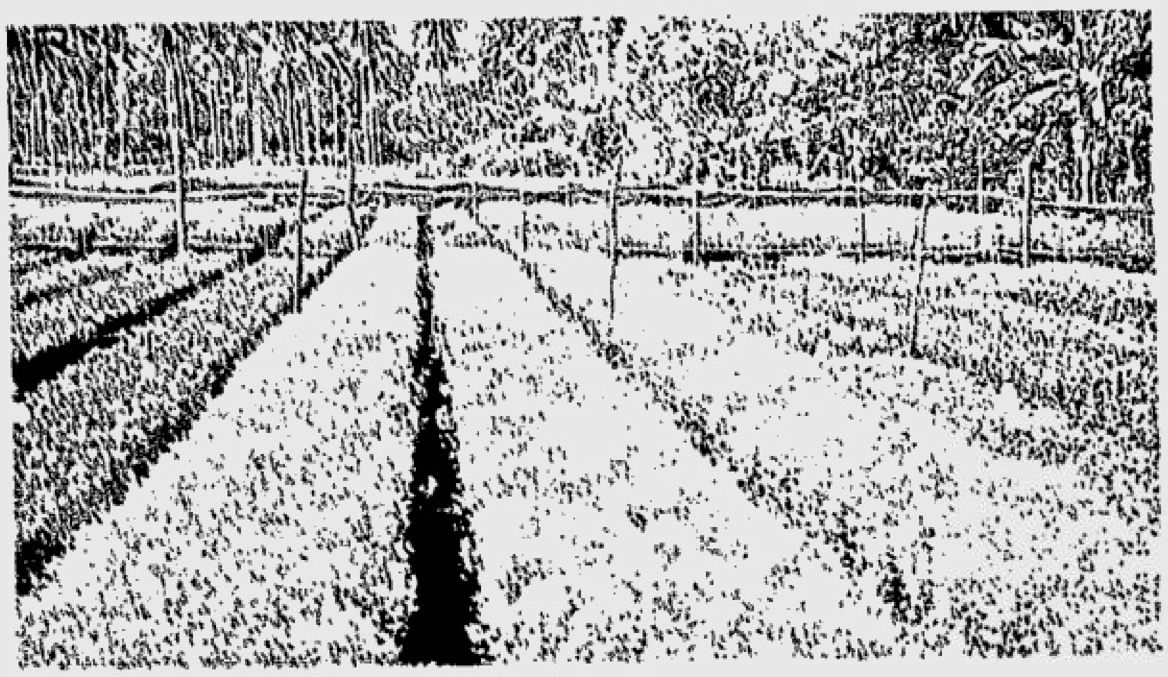
Landco Pacific breaks into other segments of resort industry

By Tina Arceo-Dumlao

UPSCALE real estate developer Landco Pacific Corp. broke into other segments of the resort industry with the development of the Leisure Farms in Tagaytay, a residential farm estate targeting those who want a weekend nature retreat.

Landco project director Alfred Xerez-Burgos III said in an interview that the property in Metro Tagaytay was originally intended for a golf course, but plans changed in 1998 following the Asian currency crisis and the real estate glut.

"It so happened that I was doing my thesis in 1998, and I looked for options other than a golf course for the project. Selling farmlots has always been at the back of our minds, but it was only then that we decided to do it," Xerez-Burgos said.



VARIOUS small and large demo farms will grow a wide range of fruit and vegetable crops, fish and poultry.

'Agritainment'

Calling the concept "agritainment," Leisure Farms would combine the amenities of other Landco projects such as swimming pools, a clubhouse and camping grounds with lots where the buyers can grow their own vegetables or tend their own flower garden.

Launched in October 2001, Leisure Farms has now expanded into the second phase, with 160 reserved lots out of 600 offered for sale.

Leisure Farms is one of the first comprehensive residential farm estates that deliver top-to-bottom farm management services. The "weekend farmer," for instance, can avail himself of round-the-clock weekday farmhands, tools and agricultural technology.

Lot sizes range from 1,000 to 2,250 square meters. The cheapest sells for P1.5 million.

"Projects like these are already being done in the United States such as Disneyworld. The Epcot center, for instance, shows different types of farming technologies," Xerex-Burgos said.

Demo farms

The centerpiece of Leisure Farms is the demonstration farms showcasing different approaches to farming. One farm advocates a fully organic, all-natural approach while the other specializes in hybrid farming.

Some 13.5 hectares were earmarked for the "agritainment" center where similar demonstration farms would be set up to encourage residents to try their hand in agriculture.

Projects such as the coffee farm with Figaro Coffee Co., a fruit orchard, a bee farm with Tobee's Apiary and a hydroponics greenhouse with Nepafirm would be on stream shortly.

"We hope that we could help reintroduce agriculture and at the same time offer a place for those who want to get away from city life," he said.

Leisure Farms is positioned as a second home, hitting the A to triple A crowd.

Landco is a major multi-produce developer, which is positioning itself to be a dominant real estate developer in the resort category. Its projects include the Peninsula de Punta Fuego residential resort; Canyon Woods; Costa de Madera in San Juan, Batangas; and Batulao Woodlands in Balayan, Batangas.

Construction Show Cebu

CONSTRUCTION Show Cebu, the largest and longest running construction and infrastructure trade show in the Southern Philippines, will hold its 10th annual expo from June 7 to 10 at the SM City Cebu Trade Hall. This was announced by event organizer, Lilibeth D. Abais, managing director, L.A. Ducut & Co. Inc. (Ladci).

"For the past 10 years, the trade expo has been the foremost showcase for new products, technology, systems, and services in the building and construction industry in the southern Philippines," Abais explained. It has displayed a consistent commitment in promoting the growth and development of the industry by featuring the latest technology and innovations available to industry specifiers and consumers.

The expo will gather industry leaders as well as upcoming firms. Exhibitors that have confirmed their participation include Atlanta Industries, Hamburg International Sales Corp., Electro Werk Inc., Barica Heavy Equipment Parts Center, Neltex Development Co. Inc., Eurotiles Industrial Corp., JK Werkzeuge, Central Lumber Corp., Worldwide Steel Corp., Tamsons Enterprises Inc., Riviera Filipina, House of Laminates Inc., Camp Marketing & Development Inc., International Surface Finishing Co., James Hardie Phils. Inc., Kent Industrial Corp., Mach-Tools Inc., Cebu Bionic Builders Supply Inc., Global Brands Co. Inc., Pozzolanic Phils. Inc., Vignet Construction and Classical Touch.

Others are K Plast Inc., Multi-Rich Home Decors Inc., Lincoln B.C.Phils. Inc., Phoenix Building Systems Inc./Camp Mktg., Cebu Oversea Hardware Co. Inc., North & South Builders Supplies Inc., Donaldson Filtration (Asia Pacific) Pte. Ltd., Prit Enterprises Inc., Southland Shutters Trading & Services, King's Industrial Safety Supply, Filmon Hardware, Euro Asia Marble & Granite Inc., Pacific Paint & Oil Manufacturing Inc. (Boysen Paints), Techno Trade Resources Inc., and Petronne Trading Corp.

CUEVAVILLE'S 'ALL-IMPORT' DEP'T STORE

CUEVASVILLE Realty and Development Corp. recently opened Kristine, the in-house department store of Cuevasville Plaza (FRC Mall), the company's mall project in Bacoor, Cavite. Kristine is offering a wide range of imported products—leather goods, men's and ladies apparel, luggage, children's wear—at affordable prices.

New road projects completion to spur South Luzon growth, says developer

LEADING township developer Empire East Land Holdings Inc. expects more investments to come to South Luzon, particularly in Laguna and Cavite, once the new interchange at the South Luzon Expressway (SLEX) and the Biñan-Sta. Rosa circumferential road are completed.

Empire East Land president Anthony Charlemagne Yu said the new SLEX interchange in Sta. Rosa, Laguna, and the circumferential road will significantly improve traffic flow and stimulate more economic- and tourism-related activities that will greatly benefit both the residents and the workers of the multinational firms operating in the area.

Yu likewise lauded the private sector's initiatives in these infrastructure projects, saying such efforts are necessary in boosting the development of the Sta. Rosa growth center as well as bustling Gen. Trias in Cavite.

The new SLEX interchange will be located in Barangay Malitlit in Sta. Rosa while the circumferential road will serve as an alternate route from the Tagaytay-Balibago Road to the Mamplasan Interchange.

Yu noted that the new SLEX interchange can serve as an alternative route to its popular Laguna BelAir township development, which can be accessed through the Sta. Rosa and Mamplasan Interchanges, and the Governor's Hills project in Gen. Trias, Cavite.

Empire East Land is currently marketing the commercial center of Laguna BelAir in Sta. Rosa. The commercial center is zoned into two parts: The Strip along the township's Rodeo Drive and The Center, which lines the Sta. Rosa-Tagaytay National Highway. The area already hosts McDonald's, Metrobank, Servitek and a number of recently opened stores, an Internet café, a freight and cargo service center, a travel agency, a ready-to-wear boutique, a beauty salon, a bookstore and a laundry outlet.

In Gen. Trias, Cavite, the company's affordable housing subsidiary, Empire East Properties Inc., is currently fast-tracking land development work on the 16-hectare commercial component of its Governor's Hills residential-commercial project.

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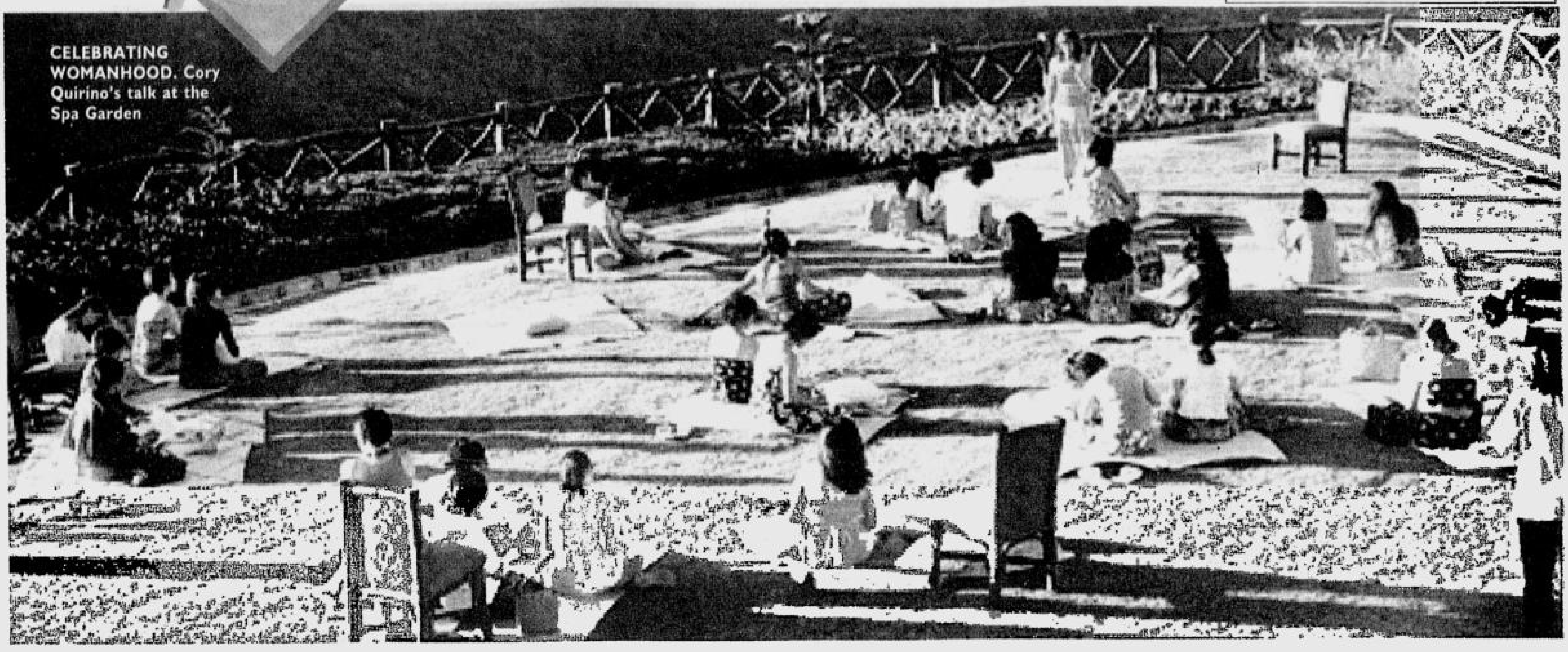

CELEBRATING WOMANHOOD. Cory Quirino's talk at the Spa Garden

State of grace

This klutz joins the Dove spa getaway and experiences bliss of mind, body and soul

By Pam Pastor

WHEN my editor mentioned the word "spa," I grabbed this assignment. Never mind that the experience would supposedly "awaken the woman within." Never mind that my excess testosterone stirred nervously at this idea because I've never been ultra-feminine in my life. I psyched myself up and made a vow that I will be the perfect picture of poise and grace if only for the 24-hour duration of this event, which was held at The Spa Lodge in Tagaytay Highlands.

The Spa Lodge was beautiful; its rooms were even more breathtaking. The furniture was gorgeous, the bay window cozy—countless pillows were all around—the bathroom spacious. Something about the room made me feel that I was finally getting into the groove of things—that klutzy old me will manage to be calm and poised for at least a day.

Prescribed outfit

My moment of peace was momentarily rattled by the discovery that we had been provided with outfits. A sarong set had been thoughtfully laid out on my bed. The sarong was fine, but the tube top, which looked more like a headband to me, wasn't. Being—err—not flat-chested (the understatement of my life), it could hardly fit over my chest. Give me points for trying (and making a complete idiot of myself), but as for walking out wearing that—my love for my craft has its limits.

Although pink isn't really my color, the new sarong set is a better option. Wearing the wrong shade is a notch above being guilty of indecent exposure.

Once again, we all gathered in The Great Room, clad in sarongs of all colors. Toni Gregory, one of the brains behind the event, began by showering us with inspiring words. She told us how the people behind Dove, our sponsor, wanted us to experience total bliss of body, mind and soul. This is what their products are pushing—for women to see bathing as an art, as a cleansing of the body, mind and spirit and not just a routine for hygiene.

Evolved woman

Toni also spoke about the "evolved woman" and introduced us to the Dove Evolved Women who were there to share the experience with us. They were, Elsa Payumo, who has devoted a significant part of her life to tourism and civic service; Belinda Herrera, vice president of marketing for Belle Corp.; Selina Gecalea de Venecia, mother and finance expert who was once vice president of Citibank; Jul Dizon, an international jewelry artist; Tita Trillo, a wine, spirits and cuisine expert who is president of Anthony's Wines and Spirit Corp. and Le Gastronome Gourmet Corp.; and Sandy Castro Poblador, president of Wharton Penn Club Phils. Inc., president of the board of directors of Ocean Villas Condominium Corp. and financial adviser for an established law firm.

We meditated to relax. I felt the calm enveloping me as I let go of every part of my body. I felt completely relaxed and at the same time, self-aware.

At The Spa Garden, we sat down for Cory Quirino's talk. I've always viewed inspirational talks with disdain—in the same way that I stay away from self-help books. But this time, I found myself listening. And understanding.

She spoke about the 4 Ds of staying young—dedication, drive, discipline and delight. She shared with us an anecdote that ended with this beautiful line, "Your destiny is what you make of your womanhood." She told us of ways by which we can love ourselves. This is one principle I feel strongly about—after all, how can you love others and expect others to love you if you do not love your own self?

For most women in the group, which included Annie Ringor, Tess Mapa, editor of Woman's Home Companion, and Ricci Barrios, the most memorable was the "Magic Ha!" ritual, where you spit a person that you hate

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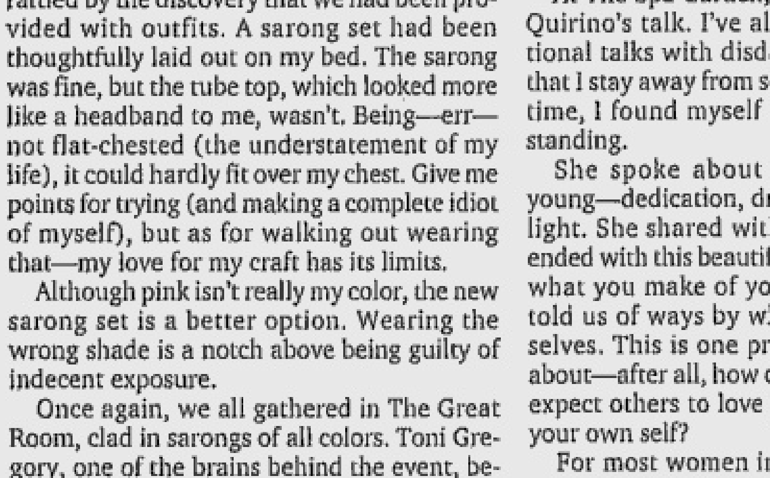

WOMEN who have evolved: Elsa Payumo, Sandy Poblador, Tita Trillo, Cory Quirino, Jul Dizon, Belinda Herrera and Selina de Venecia

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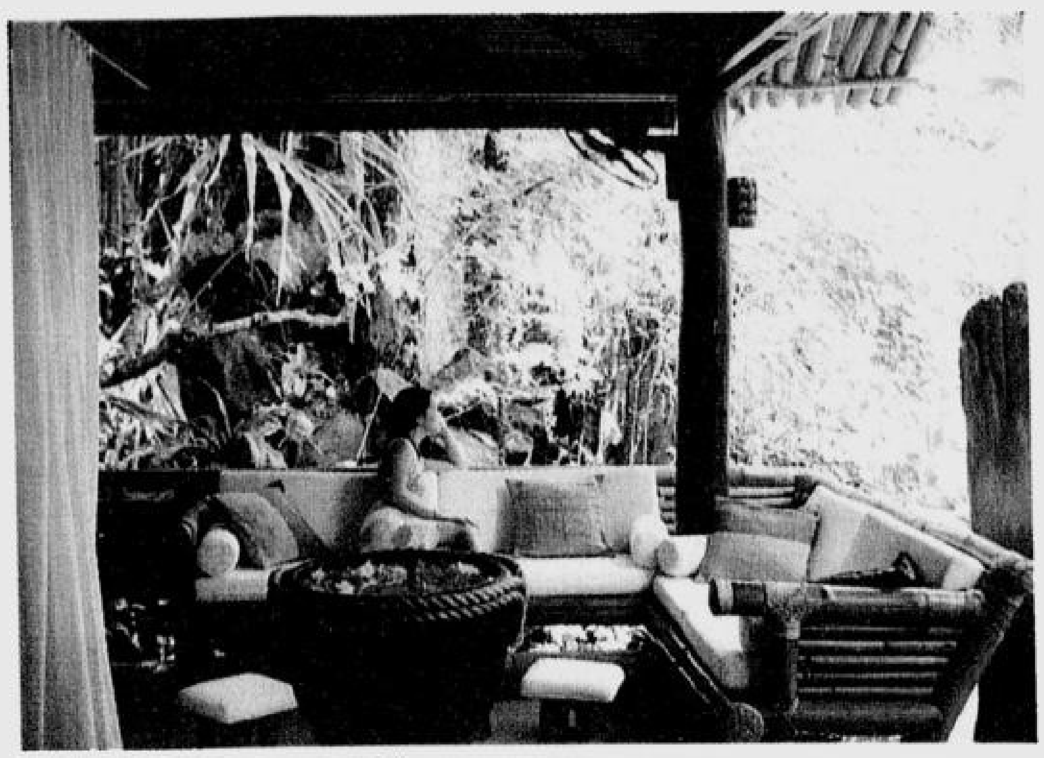
A TROPICAL oasis



QUIET moments by the waterfall

Sensuous and scented lounge act

Text and photos by Cathy Babao-Guballa

THE YLANG-YLANG Soothing Lounge, located at The Barcelo Pearl Farm (tel. 867-2847 in Manila or 234-0601) on Samal Island in Davao, is a tropical spa that is conducive for daydreaming and meditation. The lounge is an oasis where you can be mesmerized by the gentle waterfall or lie quietly while indulging in body and beauty treatments from highly skilled therapists beneath coconut palms.

The trip to Barcelo Pearl Farm is a 45-minute ferry ride from the Waterfront Hotel in Davao City. Blessed with sunny weather all-year round, Davao is a beach junkie's paradise. The boat ride to Pearl Farm is so smooth you can be lulled to sleep while appreciating the mountains and the beach.

At the resort you are greeted by a calm wind and the gentle lapping of waves as you step off the boat onto the Parola Bar. From there you walk a few meters and just behind the beach is the Ylang-Ylang Soothing Lounge, a place where you can rest your mind, body and heart.

The idea for the lounge came from Barcelo Pearl Farm's general manager Alex Groizard, who saw the need for a special pampering place much like the spas in Bali, Indonesia and Phuket, Thailand, and teamed up with Charles Sutter who owns Asmara, a company that designs pampering treatments for several hotels around the country.

Ylang-ylang is a native flower that's known as the "flower of flowers." Its oil is heralded as an aphrodisiac and in Indonesia, beds of newlyweds are often scattered with it for luck, harmony and fertility.

Pampering packages

Located in the middle of a reflection pool, the Lounge offers exquisite pampering packages. The body and beauty treatments are based on natural products rather than chemical preparations. "Everything comes from nature and is prepared in the kitchen, depending upon the requirement," Groizard says. The massage therapies embrace the most effective European and Asian techniques. There's also a wide array of treatments for the body, face, hair, feet and hand. While the scents enhance well-being, the power of healing hands relieves congested or tight areas in your body. Fresh juices and fruit platters are available before, during or after treatments to complete a sensation of refreshment, relaxation and serenity.

Body scrubs

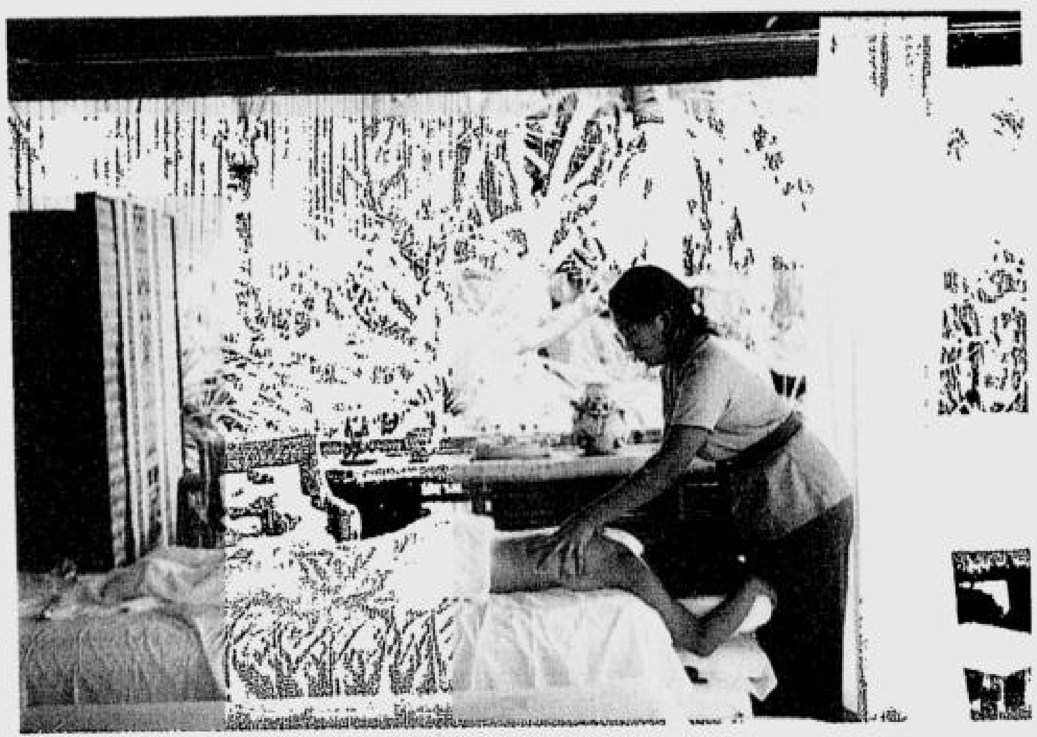
Hour-long body scrubs are very popular at the Lounge. Some of those offered are the Papaya and Aloe Vera Body Polish where mashed papaya will be smeared into your body crevices to soften and revitalize the skin. Due to the fruit's mild exfoliating properties, the skin loses a layer without the tendency to cause irritation. The treatment concludes with the application of aloe vera body lotion that will leave your skin feeling silky smooth. A personal favorite is the Loofah and Coconut Body Glow. After a loofah scrub, your body will be gently rubbed with freshly shredded young coconut rich in nutrients but not over-abrasive and turmeric powder used for its cleansing properties and high Vitamin C content. As new cells are stimulated, your skin will take on a natural glow. The treatment is completed with the application of body moisturizer.

For body massage, try the therapeutic Traditional Swedish Massage, which uses oils and involves stroking and pressing the soft tissues of the body in order to induce a state of total relaxation. The Asmara Royal Massage combines the best techniques of the East and the West. Be prepared to surrender to a sensation of serenity! Your whole body will feel afloat after this two-hour treatment. For both kinds of massage, you can choose from mineral oil, body lotion, coconut oil or essential oils extracted from plants.

For battered feet and hands, there are specific treatments as well. One-quarter of all our body's bones is in our feet. It seems they deserve as much, if not more, attention than any other part of our body. All foot treatments start with a refreshing native flower foot soak to relieve tired feet. Sampaguita essential oil is added as a symbolic gesture to wash away bad luck. A relaxing pressure point massage will help restore your physical and mental harmony.

> After an hour-long body scrub with mashed papaya or a two-hour massage with mineral oil at this Davao resort, who needs pearls?

PAROLA deck



PAMPERING bliss

Skin and hair treatments

The Sand and Olive Oil Scrub is an hour-long treatment that exfoliates hard skin which develops on the soles of the feet. Beach sand is mixed with olive oil and rubbed on your feet followed by an application of soothing lotion. For hand treatment, first soak your hands in milk to cleanse and soften the skin. This continues with a gentle skin sloughing with natural pumice and loofah sponge. You may choose from three kinds of scrubs: Glycerin and Salt Scrub, a traditional Asian scrub that cleanses the pores and removes the dead outer layer of the skin; Aloe Vera lotion, which moisturizes and adds conditioning nutrients; and Citrus scrub, a mix of essential oils and lemon extract.

Soapwort, a natural foaming agent, cleanses the skin while ground avocado stones gently exfoliate to leave it soft and smooth. There's also Rice Bran scrub, an exfoliating and invigorating scrub made with traditional Chinese ingredients. Ground rice removes dead skin cells while rice bran oil softens and moisturizes newly polished skin.

For hair, there is an Egg and Celery treatment where, after washing with coconut milk, eggs are massaged onto your hair to enhance hair growth and strength. Celery juice is added to increase hair elasticity. A scalp massage to improve circulation concludes this traditional Indonesian treatment. There is also, among others, a Palm Oil and Carrot Juice Hair Cream Bath where rice starch and palm oil is applied from the roots to the ends of your hair to treat dry and damaged hair. Carrot juice is added to heal split ends. Your scalp is then massaged with fingertip pressure to stimulate and encourage new hair growth. After steaming, the cream is washed off leaving hair healthy, soft and shiny.

Facial

There are several facial treatments to choose from but one of the most popular is the Tea Tree Oil Facial Scrub, a foaming scrub that contains ground tea tree leaves to gently remove excess oil, impurities and dead skin cells. The antibacterial tea tree oil helps combat spots while beeswax and provitamin B5 condition the skin. The treatment is completed with a vegetable moisturizer.

The Ylang-Ylang Soothing Lounge is open to both hotel guests and visitors. Reservations need to be made in advance. What would be ideal is to leave the pier at Waterfront early in the morning, spend a day on the beach or at the pool and after lunch, indulge in a pampering session. Then, return to the city via the last ferry that leaves the resort at 4 p.m. or stay in one of the quaint Samal houses that line the resort. Lie under a blanket of stars and let the gentle waves lull you to sleep as you savor the scent of ylang-ylang.

E-mail the author at cbguballa@inquirer.com.ph

State of grace

From page C1

out onto the ground and let the sun take them down with it and burn them. No negative energy, Cory said, because you are merely releasing them. This was an eye-opener for me, not because I found a new ritual but because I discovered that there was no single person I hated with enough intensity to want to spit them out. Not to say that I have never been wronged in my life because I've had more than my fair share of pain. I was just surprised that I had already let go of my furies without knowing it.

After dinner, we got ready for spa treatments. Most of us wanted massages and a few wanted to get foot spa. My physical therapist for the night fetched me from the jacuzzi and led me to my massage room. As she kneaded my tension away, I felt myself relaxing, even forgetting the fact that I was naked. This was massage bliss.

MASSAGE haven

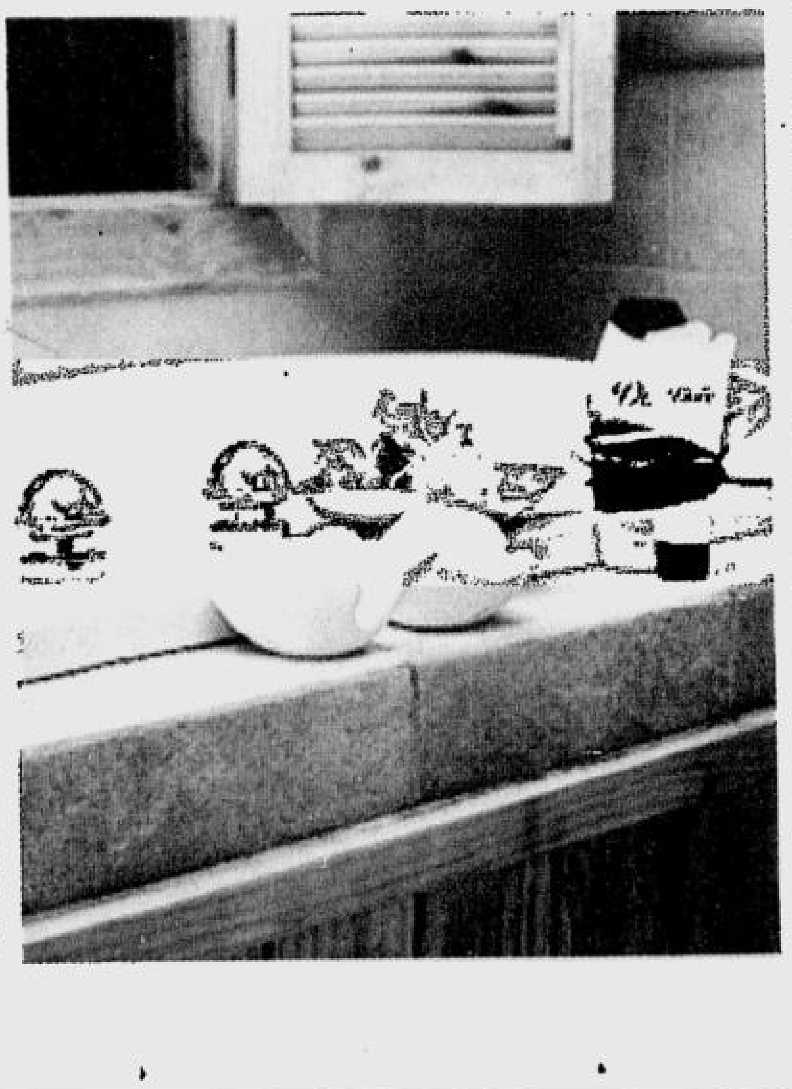
Bathing ritual

Before we had our bathing ritual, the organizers of the event had stressed that Dove isn't soap—it's a cream bar. That it's made of ¼ moisturizing cream makes all the difference.

The effects of the bathing ritual killed the skeptic in me. After all, I've been known to take long therapeutic baths during periods of extreme anger, stress or emotional pain. It's true—the water does wash away your fears and troubles.

After such a relaxing experience, we went for a walk at the Animal Farm and had the chance to feed miniature horses. This walk further strengthened my desire to have a sheep and a pig as pets except my mom would surely go ballistic.

We were then handed little envelopes that contained butterflies. No, not doves, just butterflies. While the others gasped with pleasure as they saw their butterflies wriggling, I started to worry because mine wasn't moving. I whispered to Tess Mapa, "I think my butterfly is dead." I started chanting in my head, "Please don't be dead, please don't be dead..."



We were asked to open them a little, whisper our deepest wish and let the butterflies hiding inside spread their wings and fly out. "Let them carry your wishes to heaven," we were told. My delicate spotted beauty of a butterfly made her way out of the envelope and flew away from me. That was absolutely exquisite—my most cherished memory of the entire trip.

After a delightful lunch, Quirino led us into making a covenant with ourselves—a covenant designed to empowering ourselves as sources of love and light.

On my way back home, I started reflecting. I'm sure even the most elegant of women have their oaf-like moments like me, right? So maybe I could evolve into a woman of grace and poise. Yeah. Maybe. Check with me in a few years.

Women's groups or organizations that would like to have their own "Dove Moment" may call Gabrielle Gregory at (0919) 326-6207 or Bridges@Com at 812-3542

E-mail the author at ppastor@inquirer.com.ph

The diet to end all diets

INSIDE OUT

Cory Quirino

WHAT in your opinion is the most challenging diet of all? Many will give answers like non-fat, vegetarian or no-food diet. But in truth, the most demanding of diets is the one that is mental—a positive mental diet. How is that possible? Simple.

Childhood programming

Parents, overtaken by their enthusiasm and over-solicitousness, tend to over-protect their children, thus, keeping a child out of harm's way is as easy as saying "no." The "no" word soon becomes one of the very first words in a baby's vocabulary.

All grown up

Whether we like it or not, the "no" word is deeply embedded in our consciousness that "no" is woven into our regular thinking pattern. "No," a negative word, is welcome as a member of the mind's thinking vocabulary. "No, you can't do it," "No, don't do it." By being at home with "no," the "yes" becomes strange and alien.

Saying 'no' to liberate 'yes'

Negative programming extols "no" and rebukes "yes." Subconsciously, the "no's" are the enemies of "yes"—limiting, inhibiting, stifling a person's possibilities for growth and happiness.

What will happen if we say "no" to "no" in order to allow "yes" to live, thrive? It will, psychotherapists say, liberate the spirit, unshackle it from the bondage of "no."

'Yes' exercise

On a piece of paper, write the word "yes." Write the biggest "yes" you ever saw. Let it be your mantra for the day. Paste it on your mirror. And every morning you will say "yes" to yourself and "Yes, it is a beautiful and great day for me today." And at the end of the day, "Yes! It has been a great day." Begin and end your day with "yes."

Changes

A subtle yet discernible change will happen.

1. Physically, you will actually feel lighter, shoulders won't collapse inward anymore and you will stand taller.
2. Emotionally, your mood will be more cheery and your outlook, more optimistic.
3. Intellectually, you will begin to realize that there is nothing you cannot do—except that which your mind limits.

Good mood rituals

Ginger-Lemon Tonic
Ingredients:
Ginger slivers
Slice of lemon (optional)
1 tsp honey
Ice

Pound 3 slivers of fresh ginger. Add chilled water. Squeeze ¼ of a lemon into ginger water. Mix in a blender with ice and honey. Ginger, being an antispasmodic and antiseptic, will wash away the pollutants in your system, calm the tummy, and give you a refreshing zing with every sip.

Ginger body spray

Mix ginger juice —2 tbsp and 1 tsp lemon in a bottle of water. Use it as a spritzer and refresher to cool you off in the heat of the day.

'Yes' diet plan

Ingredients:
Positive thoughts and open mind
Procedure:

Think only positive thoughts for the day. The second you allow a negative thought to enter your mind, you go back to the first day and start all over again. A negative thought can range from your hesitance to take action on something important, complaining about your life and the traffic, your noisy neighbor or your diet plan.

Be patient. It takes training to do this. What you are attempting to do is to reprogram your mind thereby transcending your own negative programming.

A positive thought can only bring good into your life. Because whatever goodness you send out will only come back to you—a hundred-fold!

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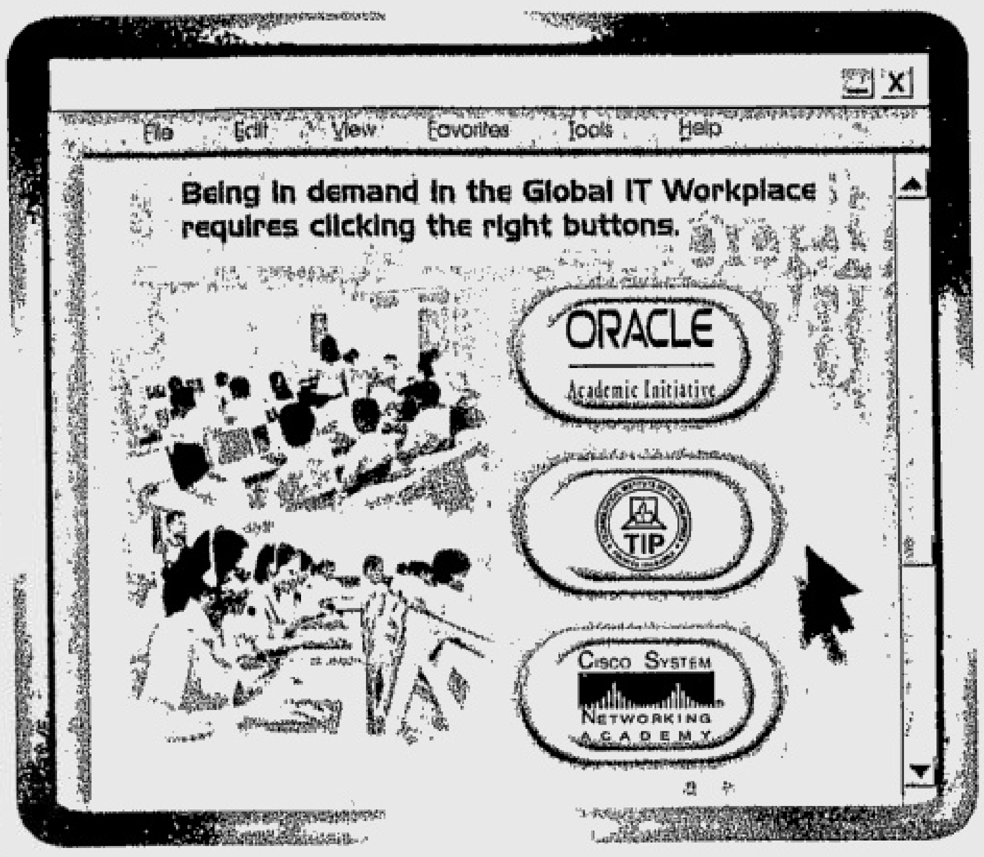

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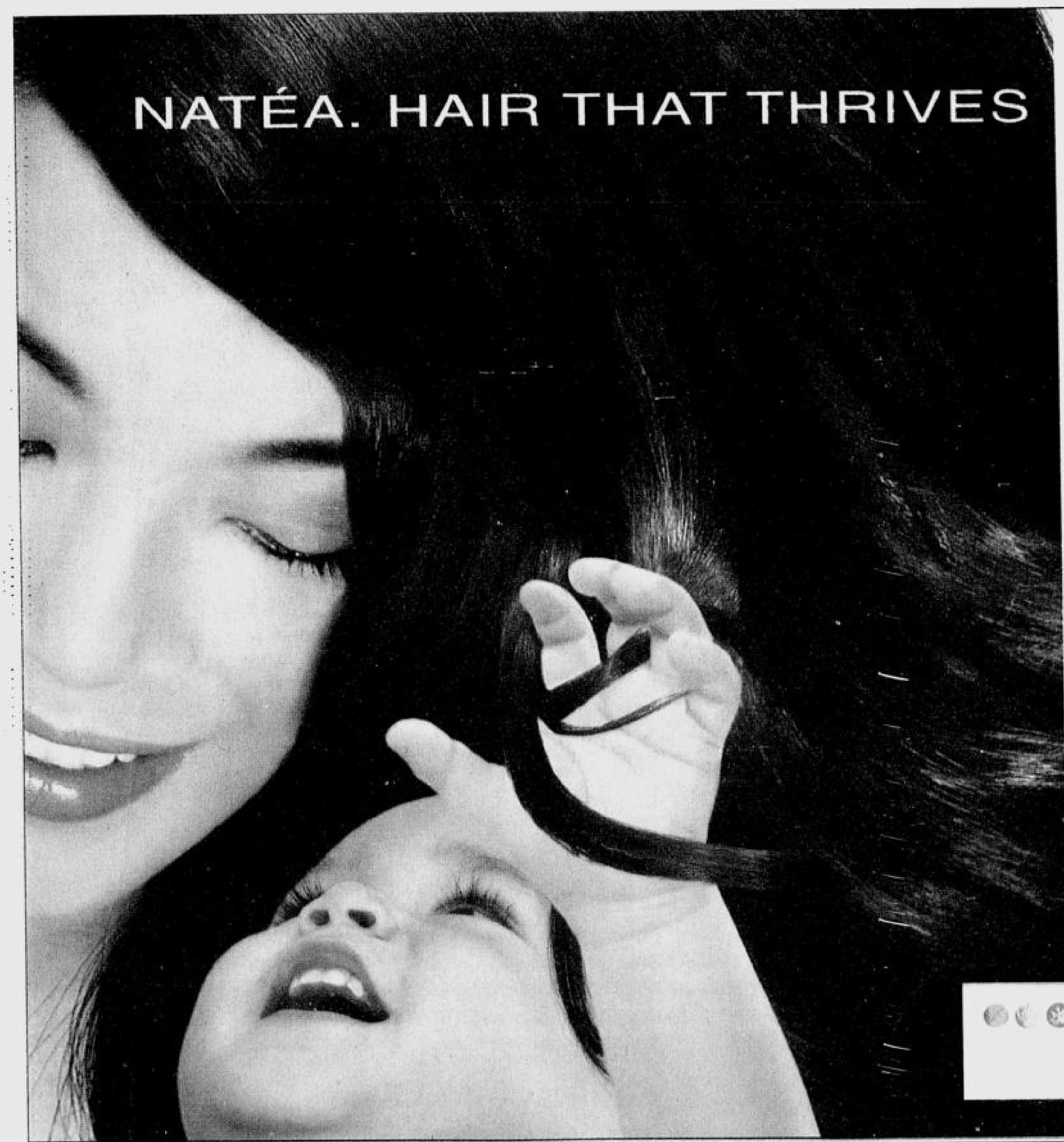

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LIFESTYLE

Who's afraid of the big bad carb?

WELL AND GOOD

Tina Juan

MANY people these days have "carbohydrate phobia." I am not surprised because in the last 10 years there has been an onslaught of diet books that blame carbohydrates for causing insulin resistance, which in turn they say causes obesity. Books like "The New Dr. Atkins Diet Revolution," "Sugar Busters," "Carbohydrate Addict," "Protein Power" and "The Zone Diet" have all ganged up on the hapless carbohydrate. This is actually nothing new because in the '70s the carbohydrate was the favorite whipping boy of the diet world. Fat was the reigning "bad guy" in the '80s. In the '90s, the pendulum has swung back to the carbohydrate being the scapegoat again. Hopefully, in the 21st century, the blame will fall where it rightly belongs—on too many calories coming in and not enough going out. That's right, the real culprit of excess weight is eating more and moving less.

Dr. Gerard Reaven agrees. Reaven is a research endocrinologist whose studies are mentioned by many of the anti-carbohydrate books as proof that carbohydrates and insulin resistance are to blame for the rising levels of obesity. What is ironic is that Reaven does not agree with the anti-carb diet gurus.

In an interview with Nutrition Action Health Letter in 1996, Reaven said, "There are so many studies showing that if you decrease calories, people lose weight, and it doesn't matter if you do it by cutting fat, protein, or carbohydrate. A calorie is a calorie is a calorie."

He added, "Carbs don't make you fat, and insulin doesn't make you fat, as the books claim. Calories make you fat. It's like a bankbook. It's a matter of how much you put in and how much you take out. The more you eat and the fewer calories you burn up, the heavier you'll get. The law of thermodynamics, to the best of my knowledge, hasn't been repealed recently."

Reaven does not believe that insulin resistance causes obesity. He says, "Years ago, we put people with different degrees of insulin resistance on dramatically different diets—in one study, carbohydrates were either 85 or 17 percent of the calories. The only thing that affected their weight was how many calories

WHO'S/ p. D4

> 'It's a matter of how much you put in and how much you take out. The more you eat and the fewer calories you burn up, the heavier you'll get'

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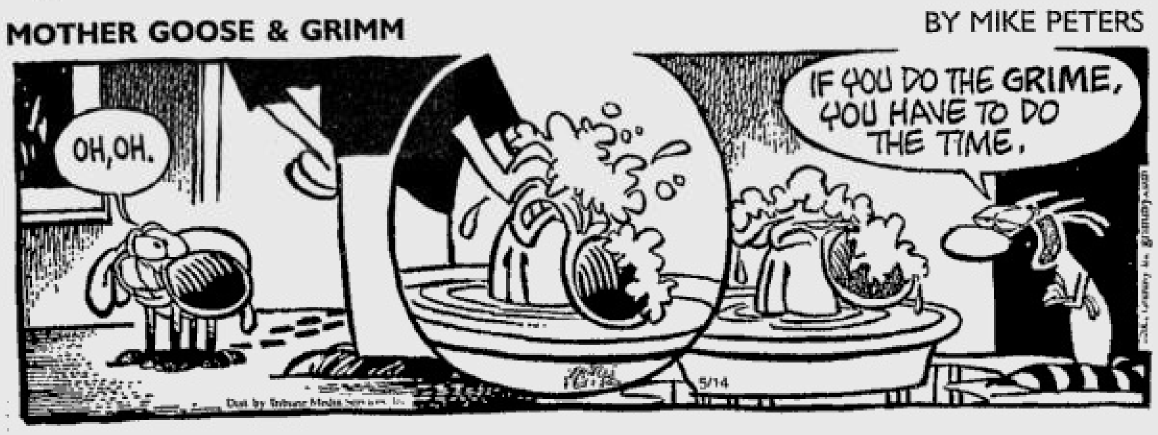
OH, OH.
IF YOU DO THE GRIME, YOU HAVE TO DO THE TIME.
5/14
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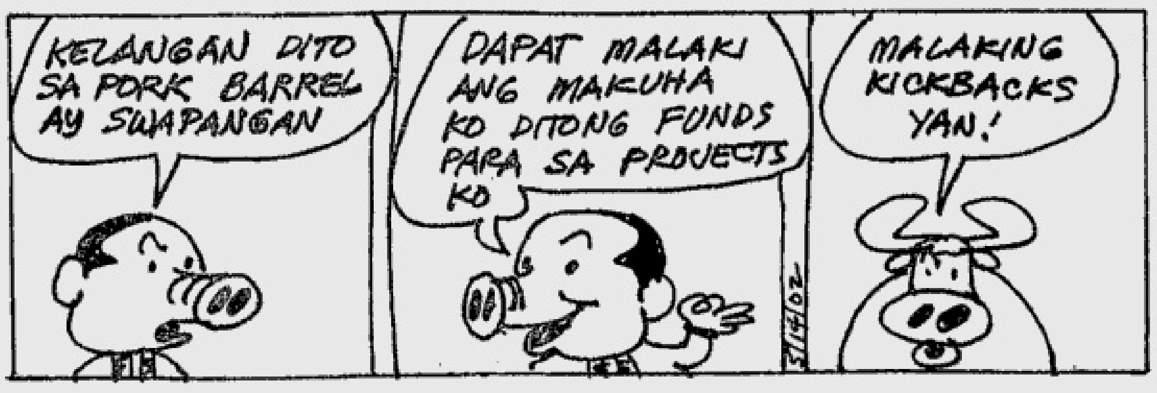
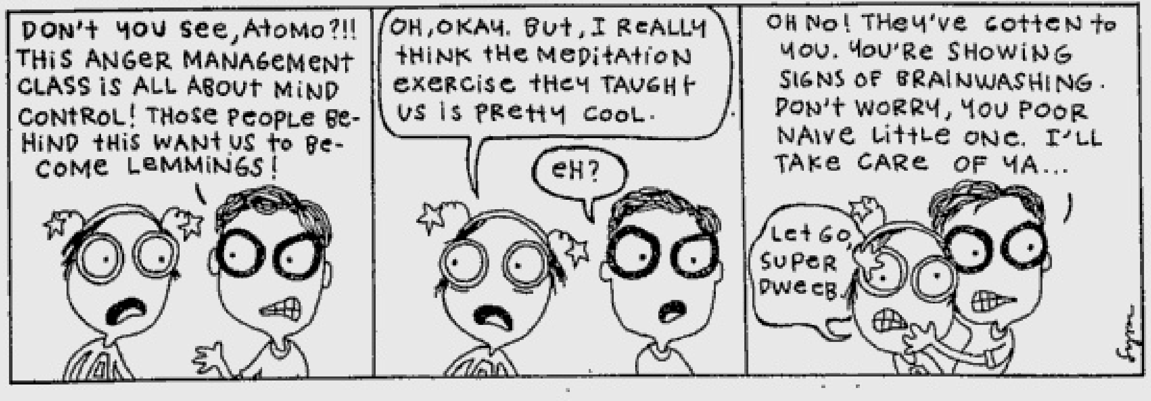
A. LIPIN

BY JESS ABRERA


KELANGAN DITO SA PORK BARREL AY SWAPANGAN
DAPAT MALAKI ANG MAKUHA KO DITONG FUNDS PARA SA PROJECTS KO
5/14/02
MALAKING KICKBACKS YAN!

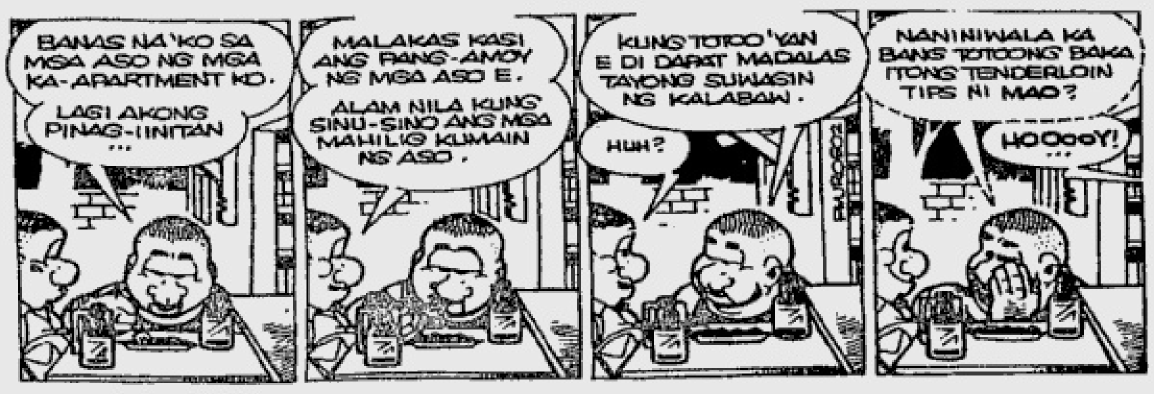
ATOMO AND WEBOY

BY LYRA GARCELLANO


DON'T YOU SEE, ATOMO?!! THIS ANGER MANAGEMENT CLASS IS ALL ABOUT MIND CONTROL! THOSE PEOPLE BEHIND THIS WANT US TO BECOME LEMMINGS!
OH, OKAY. BUT, I REALLY THINK THE MEDITATION EXERCISE THEY TAUGHT US IS PRETTY COOL.
EH?
OH NO! THEY'VE GOTTEN TO YOU. YOU'RE SHOWING SIGNS OF BRAINWASHING. DON'T WORRY, YOU POOR NAIVE LITTLE ONE. I'LL TAKE CARE OF YA...
LET GO, SUPER DWEEB.

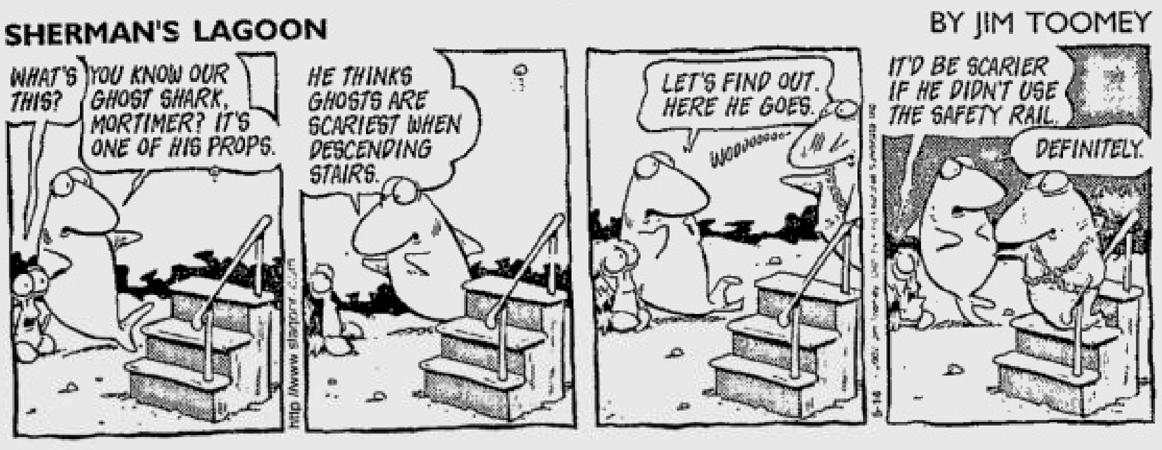
PUGAD BABOY

BY P.M. JUNIOR


BANAS NA'KO SA MGA ASO NG MGA KA-APARTMENT KO.
LAGI AKONG PINAG-IINITAN ...
MALAKAS KASI ANG PANG-AMOY NG MGA ASO E.
ALAM NILA KUNG SINU-SINO ANG MGA MAHILIG KUMAIN NG ASO.
KUNG TOTOO 'YAN E DI DAPAT MADALAS TAYONG SUWAGIN NG KALABAW.
HUH?
NANINIWALA KA BANG TOTOONG BAKA ITONG TENDERLOIN TIPS NI MAO?
HOOOOOY! ...

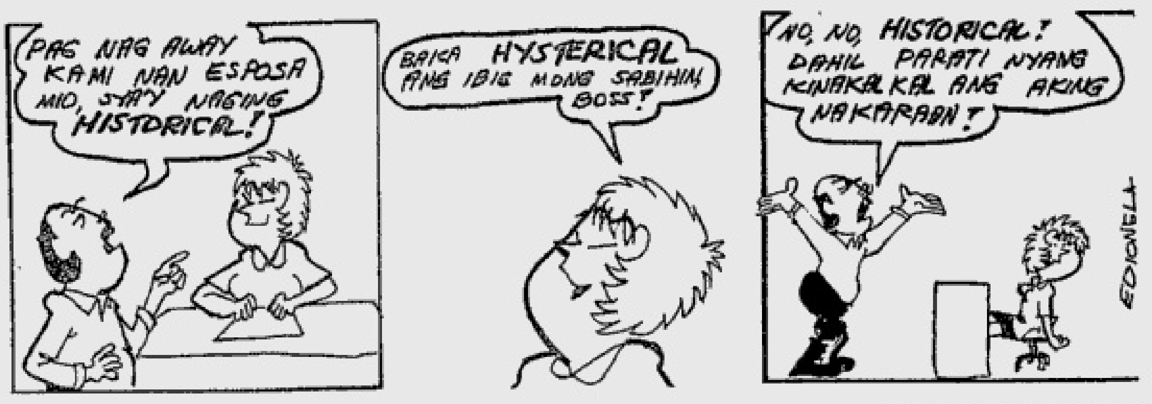
SHERMAN'S LAGOON

BY JIM TOOMEY


WHAT'S THIS?
YOU KNOW OUR GHOST SHARK, MORTIMER? IT'S ONE OF HIS PROPS.
HE THINKS GHOSTS ARE SCARIEST WHEN DESCENDING STAIRS.
http://www.slagoon.com
LET'S FIND OUT. HERE HE GOES.
WOOOOOOO
IT'D BE SCARIER IF HE DIDN'T USE THE SAFETY RAIL.
DEFINITELY.

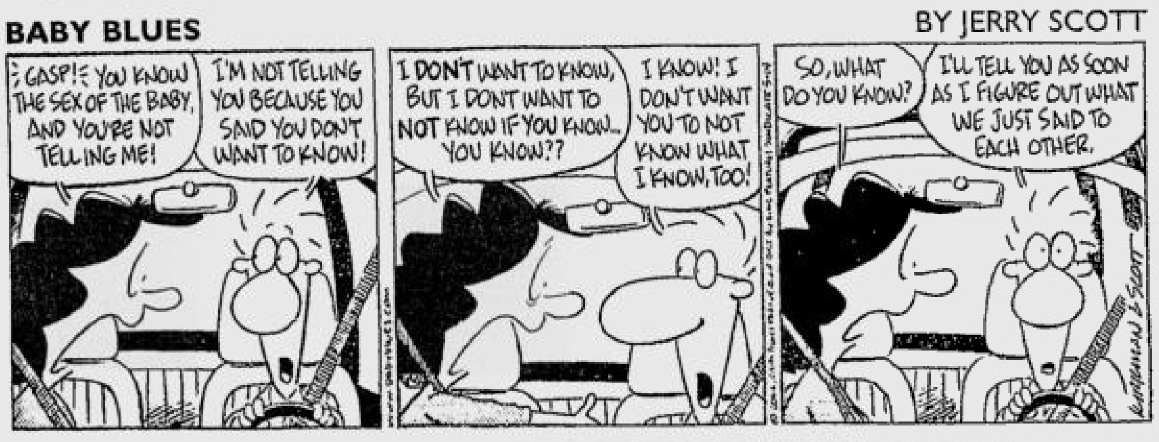
SIMO

BY EDGAR DIONELA


PAG NAG AWAY KAMI NAN ESPOSA MIO, SIYA'Y NAGING HISTORICAL!
BAKA HYSTERICAL ANG IBIG MONG SABIHIN, BOSS?
NO, NO, HISTORICAL! DAHIL PARATI NYANG KINAKALKAL ANG AKING NAKARAAN?
EDIONELA

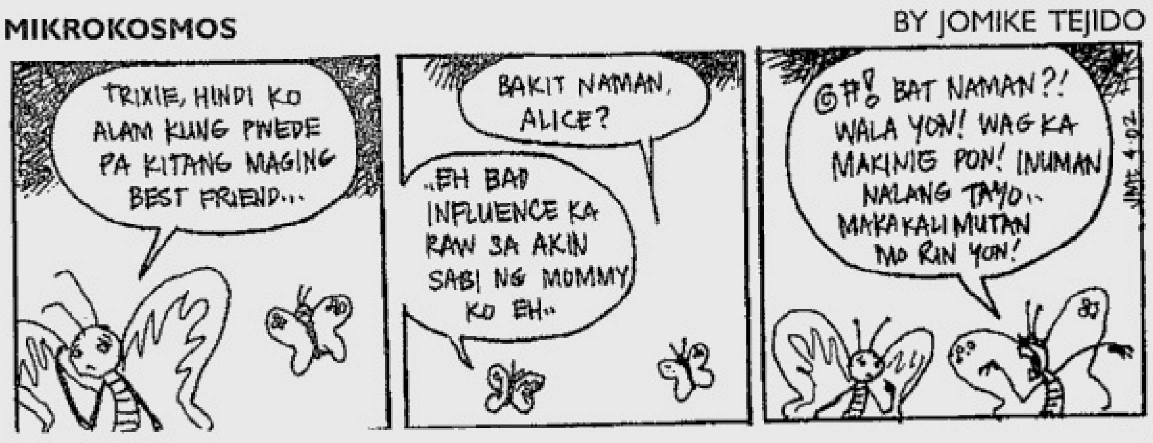
BABY BLUES

BY JERRY SCOTT


GASP! YOU KNOW THE SEX OF THE BABY, AND YOU'RE NOT TELLING ME!
I'M NOT TELLING YOU BECAUSE YOU SAID YOU DON'T WANT TO KNOW!
I DON'T WANT TO KNOW, BUT I DON'T WANT TO NOT KNOW IF YOU KNOW... YOU KNOW??
I KNOW! I DON'T WANT YOU TO NOT KNOW WHAT I KNOW, TOO!
SO, WHAT DO YOU KNOW?
I'LL TELL YOU AS SOON AS I FIGURE OUT WHAT WE JUST SAID TO EACH OTHER.
KIRKMAN & SCOTT

MIKROKOSMOS

BY JOMIKE TEJIDO


TRIXIE, HINDI KO ALAM KUNG PWEDE PA KITANG MAGING BEST FRIEND...
BAKIT NAMAN, ALICE?
..EH BAD INFLUENCE KA RAW SA AKIN SABI NG MOMMY KO EH..
@#! BAT NAMAN?! WALA YON! WAG KA MAKINIG PO! INUMAN NALANG TAYO.. MAKAKALIMUTAN MO RIN YON!
JUNE 4 02

HOROSCOPE

BY EUGENIA LAST

CELEBRITIES BORN ON THIS DAY: George Lucas, Tom Cochrane, Cate Blanchett

Happy Birthday: You can make changes in your home that will please your whole family. You will have intuitive insight when it comes to your investments, work and your home. You will have a good rapport with younger people this year. You will have success organizing social functions and creative endeavors. Your numbers are 6, 13, 28, 30, 35, 41

ARIES (March 21-April 19): Good conversation, lots of activity and getting to know more about your friends will highlight your day. Problems with mail or transportation may cause a limitation.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20): You will have a serious outlook regarding your future prospects. Your intent will be to get ahead professionally through whatever means are available to you.

GEMINI (May 21-June 20): Your obligations must be taken care of first. Someone may try to put limitations on you today. Stick up for your rights.

CANCER (June 21-July 22): Deception or evasiveness will be present today. Ask pertinent questions and don't hesitate to ask for things in writing. It will make you feel better.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22): You'll be in the spotlight today. You will be able to work with people who can help you realize your true potential. You have what it takes to excel if you are willing to believe in yourself.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22): This is not the best day to confront situations at home or at work. Focus on doing the best job possible. Don't restrict yourself because you lack confidence.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22): You'll have plenty of excitement happening in your life today. Pleasure trips or spending time with someone who intrigues you will enhance love and romance.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 21): You may find yourself in a position that makes you responsible for others. If people try to take advantage of you, you must back away and let them fend for themselves.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21): You may find yourself in an unusual situation with regard to partnerships today. Don't let anyone bamboozle you into something you don't agree with. You must stand up for your rights.

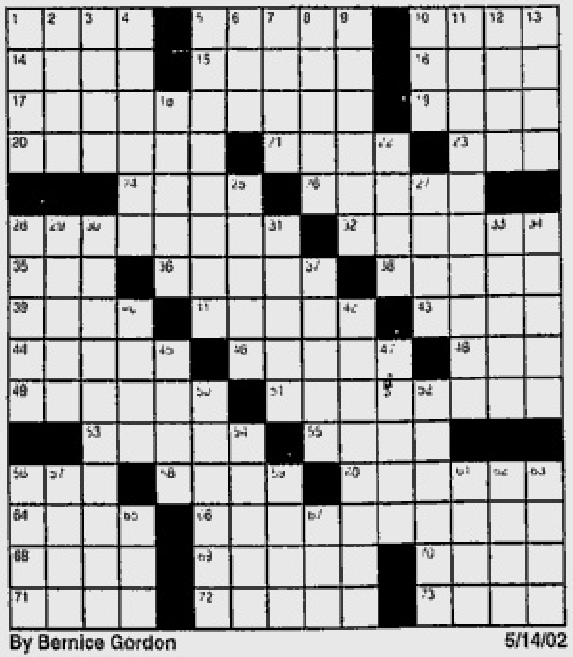
CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19): You can make headway professionally today. Be prepared to present your work and to talk to people who can help you advance.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18): You will have a serious outlook today regarding your philosophic beliefs. If you take the time to attend a lecture or conference you will discover some very valuable information that will help you in your future direction.

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20): Get out and enjoy the company of friends. Sticking around the house will be depressing and only lead to added obligations. This is a time to expand on the creative ideas you have.

Birthday Baby: You will want the best of everything throughout your life. You will be artistic, creative, outgoing and always ready to try new things. You will gravitate to unique individuals who can offer a challenge as well as friendship.

DAILY CROSSWORD



By Bernice Gordon
Philadelphia, PA

5/14/02

ACROSS
1 Cloth line
5 Choose by vote
10 Gone
14 Complexion woe
15 MTV newsman
16 Grave
17 Overly fussy person
19 "Havana" star
20 Not so tough
21 Long period of time
23 __ Palmas
24 Yard-sale warning
26 Full of furrows
28 Sports participants
32 Plucked sounds
35 Region on the SW coast of India
36 Abandon
38 Tremulous sound
39 Deck worker
41 Stowaway, e.g.
43 Jai __
44 Invited
46 Conflagrations
48 Fraction letters
49 Flummox
51 Worker
53 Parts of gallons
55 Blind part
56 Oklahoma town
58 __ homo (Behold the man!)
60 Positive poles
64 Fruit's coat
66 Pompous
68 Norse god
69 "Sesame Street" character
70 Temporary funds
71 Cameo stone
72 Slammin' Sammy
73 Italian art patron

DOWN
1 Out of danger
2 S. Amer. nation
3 "No ifs, __ or..."
4 Average
5 Eerie
6 Bud's buddy
7 Icelandic poem
8 Yielder
9 Experimental performance
10 Bustle
11 Haphazardly
12 Operatic song
13 Urges
18 Okays
22 Contents abbreviation
25 Base of a letter
27 Scarlett's place
28 Turkish VIPs
29 L'chaim, e.g.
30 Monkey business
31 __ Hawkins Day
33 Candied
34 End of a steal
37 Salon dos
40 Moore of "Ghost".
42 Broadcast again
45 Take lunch
47 Bias
50 Engraves
52 Star of "My Favorite Year"
54 Disdain
56 Woody Guthrie's boy
57 Singer Celine
59 "__ kleine Nachtmusik"
61 Guadalajara God
62 Coup d'__
63 "Auld Lang __"
65 New Jersey fort
67 Mexico city aunt

Monday's Puzzle Solved

K	A	L	E	■	S	P	A	D	E	■	S	A	N	S
E	L	O	N	■	H	E	N	I	E	■	T	R	E	E
R	O	P	E	L	A	D	D	E	R	■	R	E	A	R
N	E	E	■	O	M	A	R	S	■	T	I	A	R	A
S	S	S	■	N	I	N	E	I	R	O	N	■	■	■
■	■	■	L	I	N	T	■	S	A	N	G	O	U	T
A	B	B	A	■	G	I	A	■	N	E	B	U	L	A
P	E	A	C	H	■	C	D	C	■	D	E	R	N	S
S	T	R	E	E	P	■	J	A	B	■	A	S	A	S
E	A	R	P	L	U	G	■	L	E	A	N	■	■	■
■	■	■	I	M	P	E	R	I	L	S	■	A	S	S
S	E	L	L	S	■	M	A	P	L	E	■	N	I	P
P	A	U	L	■	L	I	N	E	B	A	C	K	E	R
A	R	N	O	■	I	N	T	R	O	■	O	L	G	A
S	L	E	W	■	S	I	S	S	Y	■	B	E	E	T

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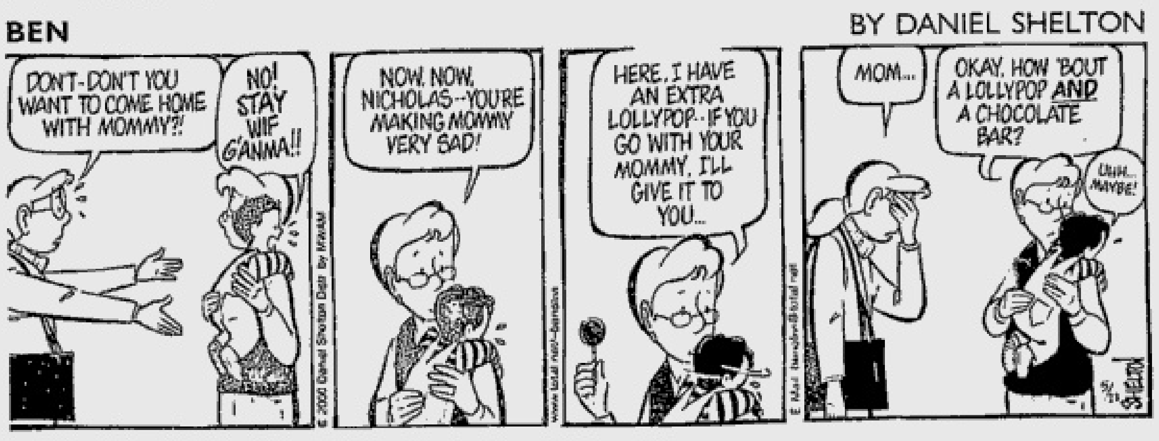
5/14/02

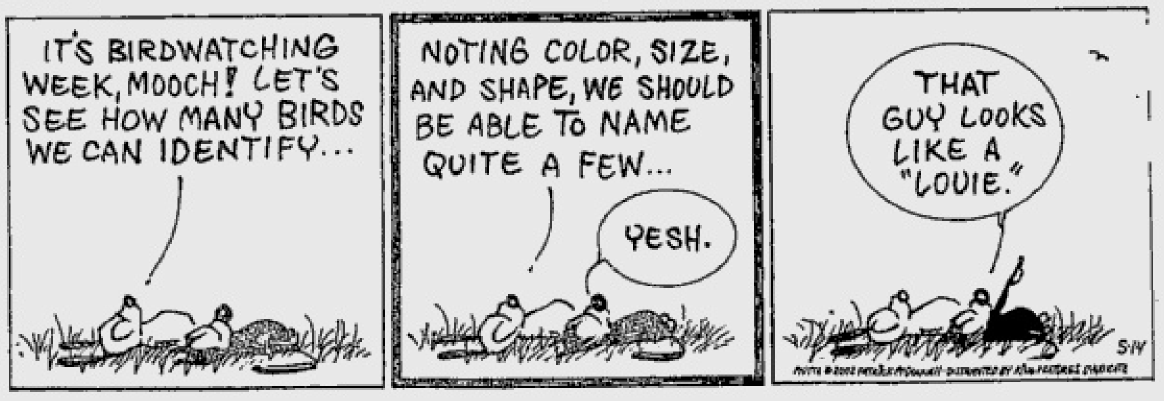
BEN

BY DANIEL SHELTON


DON'T-DON'T YOU WANT TO COME HOME WITH MOMMY?!
NO! STAY WIF G'ANMA!!
NOW, NOW, NICHOLAS--YOU'RE MAKING MOMMY VERY SAD!
HERE, I HAVE AN EXTRA LOLLYPOP--IF YOU GO WITH YOUR MOMMY, I'LL GIVE IT TO YOU...
MOM...
OKAY, HOW 'BOUT A LOLLYPOP AND A CHOCOLATE BAR?
UHH... MAYBE!
SHELTON

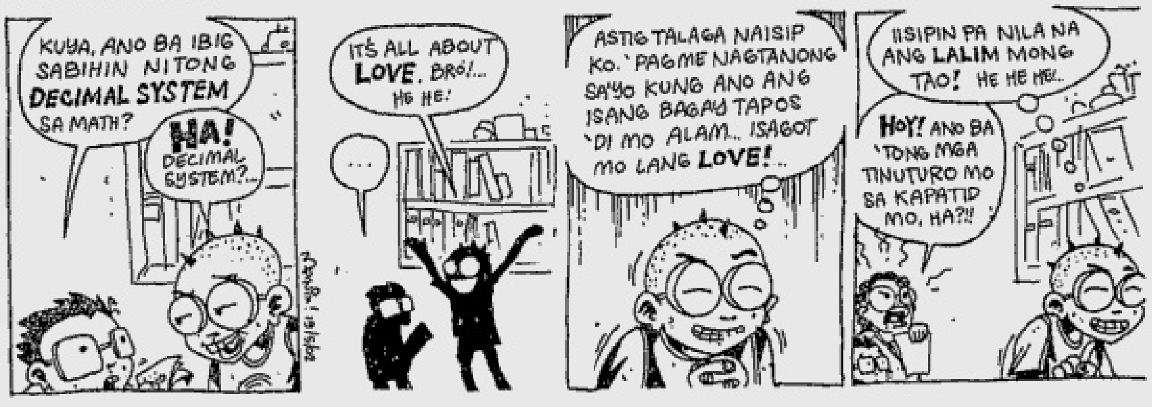
MUTTS

BY PATRICK McDONNELL


IT'S BIRDWATCHING WEEK, MOOCH! LET'S SEE HOW MANY BIRDS WE CAN IDENTIFY...
NOTING COLOR, SIZE, AND SHAPE, WE SHOULD BE ABLE TO NAME QUITE A FEW...
YESH.
THAT GUY LOOKS LIKE A "LOUIE."
5-14

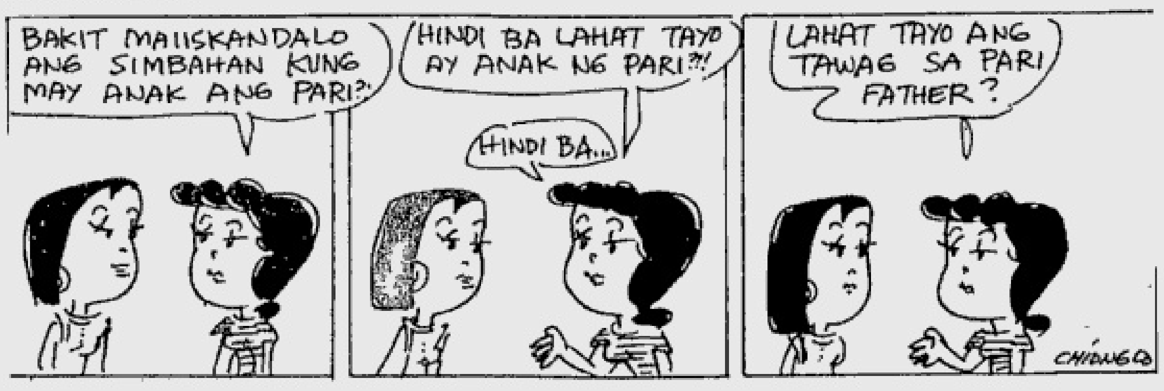
KIKO MACHINE

BY MANIX ABRERA


KUYA, ANO BA IBIG SABIHIN NITONG DECIMAL SYSTEM SA MATH?
HA! DECIMAL SYSTEM?..
IT'S ALL ABOUT LOVE, BRO!.. HE HE!
...
ASTIG TALAGA NAISIP KO. 'PAG MAY NAGTANONG SA'YO KUNG ANO ANG ISANG BAGAY TAPOS 'DI MO ALAM.. ISAGOT MO LANG LOVE!..
IISIPIN PA NILA NA ANG LALIM MONG TAO! HE HE HE!..
HOY! ANO BA 'TONG MGA TINUTURO MO SA KAPATID MO, HA?!!

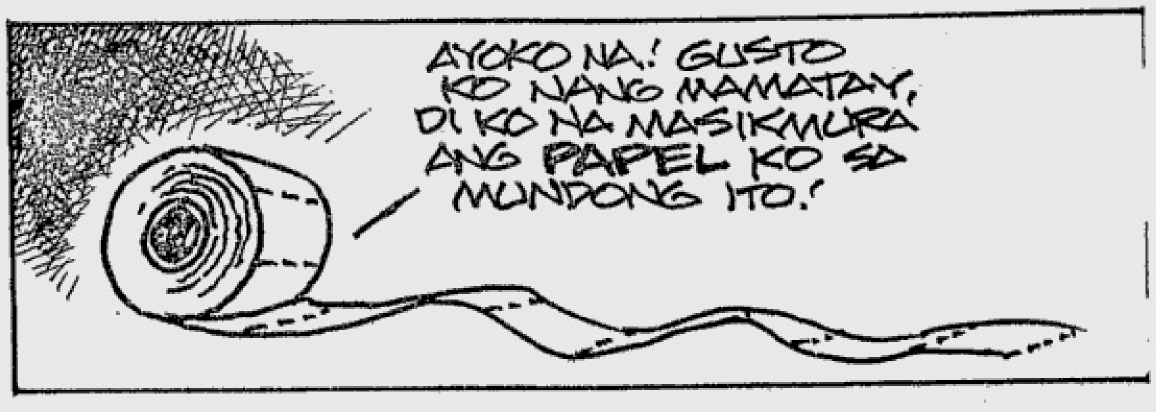
LOVEKNOTS

BY ELIZABETH CHIONGLO


BAKIT MAIISKANDALO ANG SIMBAHAN KUNG MAY ANAK ANG PARI?
HINDI BA LAHAT TAYO AY ANAK NG PARI?!
HINDI BA...
LAHAT TAYO ANG TAWAG SA PARI FATHER?
CHIONGLO

TULDOK

BY PAPU AND TATUM MILAMBILING


AYOKO NA! GUSTO KO NANG MAMATAY, DI KO NA MASIKMURA ANG PAPEL KO SA MUNDONG ITO!

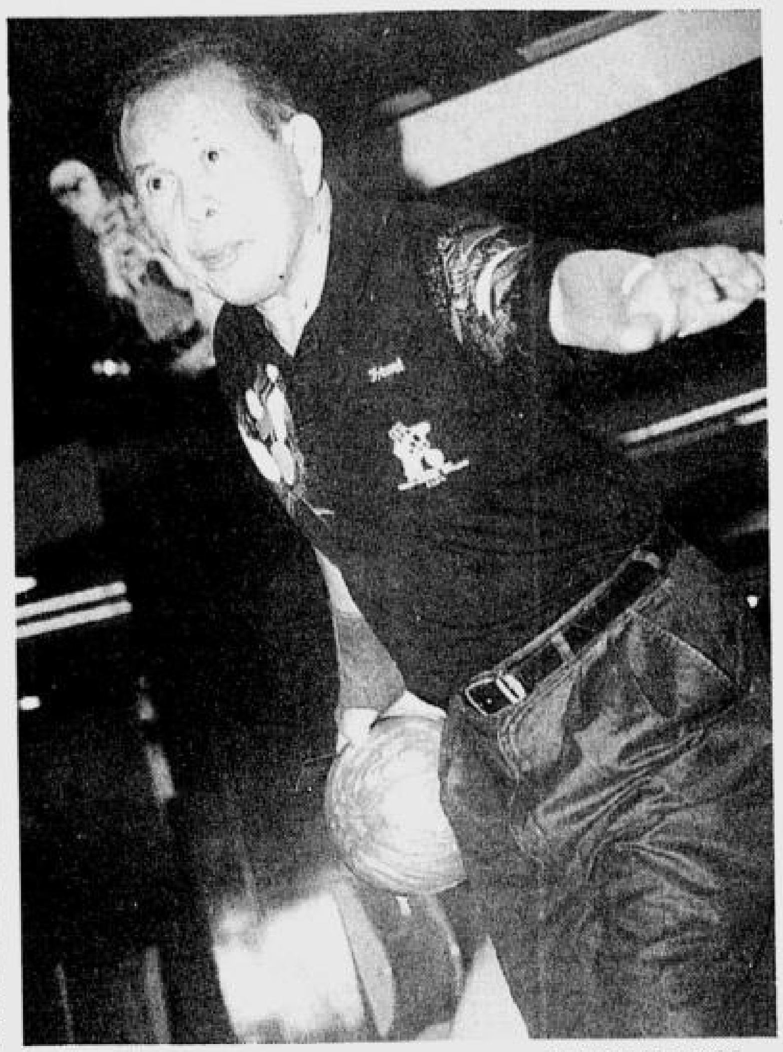
Get bowled over and win exciting prizes

OVER THE PAST few months, the SM Bowling Centers have been a-buzz with excitement as bowlers of all ages and backgrounds compete for the 1st SM Bowling Cup.

The tournament has been attracting bowlers from all over Metro Manila and Cebu. Prizes in the monthly Center finals include P10,000 for the champion, P7,500 for the 1st runner-up, and P5,000 for the 2nd runner-up. The Bowling Cup is awarding P100,000 for bowlers with a perfect game.

During the national finals, the top three winners of the Center finals will be competing for 3 days to determine the top 5 bowlers who will advance to the Stepladder finals.

Prizes at stake at the national finals which will be held this month include P100,000 for the national champion; P50,000 for the 1st runner-up, and P25,000 for the 2nd runner-up. Each winner gets a plaque.



THE ENERGETIC 70-year-old champion Francisco Barja aims for a strike during the SM Bowling Cup's 5th monthly center finals at the SM Fairview Bowling Center.

ADB'S Vilma Fabros, the 3rd runner up winner for 3 consecutive SM Bowling Cup's monthly finals

15-YEAR-OLD young champion Ian Ceriola bagged the 4th monthly center championship of SM Bowling Cup.

IST RUNNER up winner Jozzi Manumbas during the SM Bowling Cup 3rd monthly center finals

A quick look at the winners so far, reveals much diversity—young and old, male and female, students and professionals.

Francisco Barja, who placed first in the fifth monthly finals, is a retired sales director of Wrigley's. Still sprightly at 70, he is a regular at the SM Bowling Center. It was while playing at the SM Megamall Bowling Center that he saw posters of the event and joined last December.

"For me," he says, "the SM Bowling Cup is the best so far in the country. This program is giving away good incentives and because of the Cup, my average score has risen from 173 to 192."

Mr. Barja does a lot of preparation for the monthly finals, now practicing three to four times a week. "I am reviewing my bowling books to get some tips," he says. "That way, I am improving my skills and updating my bowling equipment."

He adds, "I hope to bowl until I'm 90 like American John Norris. He was still bowling when he was 71 and still playing championships at the age of 92."

Ian Ceriola, a third year high school student of St. James in Parañaque, is on the other end of the age spectrum, but that did not stop him from becoming the champion of the 4th monthly Center finals.

Ian learned to bowl when he was 11 years old and since then has joined several tournaments. "I decided to join the SM Bowling Cup to gain more experience," he says. He adds that he put his P10,000 prize money in the bank.

Women have also been doing well in the Center finals. Jozzi Manumbas, a production manager at Fairland Knitcraft is included in the SM Bowling Cup's list of top 10 bowlers. She placed second during the Center finals late last year.

Jozzi says that she started bowling at an early age, used to play with the BPI team, and has joined bowling clubs like Valiant and Viking. She likes to keep souvenirs of her bowling achievements and says that her prize money is safely placed in the bank.

Vilma Fabros, an assistant environment and social development coordinator of the Asian Development Bank finds the SM Bowling Cup "very challenging." She has apparently lived up to this challenge, emerging as 3rd runner-up in three consecutive monthly Center Finals—the second, third, and fourth.

Vilma has been bowling for 20 years and has joined different clubs and leagues. "It's exciting to compete with men," she says.

Open to male and female bowlers with an average of 175, this tournament has been ongoing at the bowling centers of SM Megamall, SM City North-EDSA, SM City Fairview, and SM City Cebu.

Interested parties may call the Bowling Centers of SM Megamall (633-7056), SM City North-EDSA (929-3320), SM City Fairview (936-8429), and SM City Cebu (032-232-0292).

ILLUSTRATION: ALBERT RODRIGUEZ

Do men have free will and dogs have souls?

INNER AWARENESS

Jaime T. Licauco

READER Ron asks if God gave us free will. "If so," according to him, "what explana tion can you give for sudden deaths and accidents that are not one's own free will? *Bakit nangyayari yung mga hindi natin gustong mangyari?* It seems to me that human will is not important, since we don't have the final say on our life."

This is the same old philosophical debate of "predestination" versus "free will." I hope I do not stir a hornet's nest by my reply, for I believe that man's will is absolutely free. And therefore, there is no predestination except what man has willed it to be. In other words, a man's destiny is the result of his own free choice—whether made in this lifetime or in a previous life.

Yes, I believe God gave us free will, and moreover, that will is absolutely free that even God cannot interfere with it. To do so would be to contradict His giving it to us.

If man has free will, why do things he does not want happen to him? Excuse me, how do you know he did not will it? I believe man chooses not only the time and place of his birth but also the time and manner of his death. Yes, even so-called "accidents" are willed by man, on an unconscious or subconscious level. It is even said that 30 days before a person dies, the soul already knows he or she will die.

Man's free will is, therefore, very important. Our job is to align our will with God's will, but we are free to go against His will. He allows this so that we may grow.

Not everything you read in philosophy and theology books are true. Many times they confuse us rather than clarify things for us.

If you really want to find truth, go within. There will you find the real answers, but then, you have to be extremely patient. And you must be relentless in its pursuit, for it has been said, "Finding truth is not so hard; what is hard is not to run away from truth once you have found it."

Here's another interesting question, apparently from a young girl who calls herself "Little Princess": "Our dog recently passed away. We miss her very much. We are curious if dogs have souls like those of human beings. Is it true there is a doggies' heaven, or are they in the same heaven like humans?"

Yes, dogs, like all living beings, have souls, because a soul is what animates every living creature. It is the principle of earthly life. But the souls of dogs are different from those of humans and those of plants.

Plants have what is called a vegetative or instinctive soul. Its function is limited to reproduction, growth and other purely mechanical or instinctive actions with no sensation, emotion or reason.

Animals have a sentient soul. In other words, they are capable of sensations and more highly developed instincts.

Animals have group souls. And when they die, they go back to the group soul without individuation, unlike humans.

However, sometimes a particular domesticated animal, such as dog or cat, can acquire a rudimentary form of individuation and may even reincarnate with the humans associated with them. This is more of an exception than the rule. For example, I've heard cases of highly evolved dogs who were seen in the spirit world by their owners who have died and communicated this fact to the living.

I am not aware of a "doggie" heaven, or something like that. That sounds more like it came from a Disneyland movie than from a factual report.

Address letters to this column to 308 Prince Plaza I, 106 Legaspi St., Greenbelt, Makati City or e-mail jlicauco@edsamail.com.ph. Visit http://jlicauco.tripod.com. Listen to my dzMM radio program every Sunday, 6-8 p.m.

Take Charge Doc!

Nicky S. Montoya, M.D.

MEDICard

Looking to learn more about your benefits under your MEDICard coverage? Do you want to be clear on the procedures, which allow you to avail of MEDICard's services? Get your information straight from MEDICard's Medical Director, DR. NICKY S. MONTOYA every Tuesday.

FAQs (frequently asked questions)

We have seen a new MEDICard membership card. Does this new card offer a different program?

The translucent blue MEDICard card you saw is the **15th year commemorative membership card**, since MEDICard is celebrating its 15th founding anniversary this May. These new cards do not offer a different health program. They carry the same guarantee of access to all accredited hospitals and medical service providers and the quality of healthcare service that MEDICard is known for. The commemorative cards, which also bear the official anniversary logo and slogan, will be issued from May 2002 to April 2003.

Meet your MEDICard Team

Dr. Sally Rachel T. Macapagal has been in the practice of her profession for more than 21 years and has been part of MEDICard's Medical Service Team since 1999. Doc Sally, as she is to most of her patients, finished her degree in Medicine at the University of Santo Tomas and earned her residency training for her specialization in Obstetric and Gynecology at St. Luke's Medical Center. She is married to lawyer Diosdado Macapagal and has been blessed with two children. You may visit Dr. Sally for your OB-Gynecological needs at Room 318 of the Medical Arts Bldg. of SLMC from Mondays to Saturdays, 10 AM to 1 PM.

ENT-Head and Neck Surgery is the chosen specialization of **Dr. Maria Riza L. Roman-Uy**, MEDICard's Medical Service Provider based in Manila Central University (MCU) Hospital. Dr. Roman earned both her degree in Medicine and residency training for her specialization in MCU. Today, she is married to dental professional Alexander T. Uy, also a MEDICard medical service provider. Doc Maria is a Diplomate of the Philippine Board of Otolaryngology-Head and Neck Surgery and a member of the Kalookan Medical Society. You may visit her for your consultation needs at Room 6 of the MCU Hospital, from Mondays to Fridays, from 10 AM to 12 noon.

MEDICard's accredited specialist in Garcia General Hospital in Marikina City is **Dr. Gerardo F. Pura**. Dr. Pura is one of the recent additions to MEDICard's roster of top-notch medical service providers. He earned his degree in Medicine at the University of Santo Tomas and specializes in Internal Medicine with residency training from the Veterans Memorial Medical Center. Doc Gerardo also subspecializes in Cardiovascular and Peripheral Vascular Medicine with training from the St. Luke's Heart Institute. You may visit him for your consultation needs at Room G-3 of Garcia General Hospital, every Tuesdays and Thursdays from 9 to 11 in the morning.

We encourage all MEDICard members to voice out their concerns and issues at hand. BE HEARD AND BE READ. You can write DR. NICKY S. MONTOYA at 9/F Sagittarius Bldg. H.V. De la Costa St., Salcedo Village, Makati City or e-mail him at inquiry@medicardphils.com. For feedback on availment of our services, e-mail us at feedback@medicardphils.com.

For inquiries on individual or family membership, dial 840 -2020 local 2017 and look for Ms. Joy Mendiola. For group or corporate membership, dial local 2049 and look for a membership consultant.

TEXT MEDICard for your queries: 0917-7518365 (Globe) or 0919-2476240 (Smart). Please don't forget to include your complete name and landline number where MEDICard could reach you. Log on to www.medicardphils.com.

MEDICard is the first and only HMO in the Philippines and the whole Asian region to be ISO 9002 certified.

ISO 9002

WHAT WOMEN SHOPPERS WANT

JOY Isla of Unilever, Robina Gokongwei of Robinson's Department Store and Yen U. Sia of Triumph International Philippines, Inc., discuss the "What Women Want" promo. Shopping at any Robinson's Department Store will treat one to special bargains. For every purchase of a combination of Triumph bra and panty (not necessarily matching), a customer is entitled to a free Unilever skin care gift pack worth P70. At the same time, every P150 purchase of Unilever products (Dove, Pond's or Vaseline lotion)—will entitle the buyer to a special discount on selected Triumph bras and panties.

Who's afraid of the big bad carb?

From page D1

they ate. More recently, we've published long-term studies showing that weight gain is unrelated to how insulin-resistant people were when the studies began. And weight loss with low-calorie diets is also unrelated to the degree of insulin resistance. So there's not one shred of evidence that insulin resistance causes obesity."

He further explains, "If you think about it, the notion that insulin resistance causes obesity is unreasonable. Insulin resistance means that insulin isn't acting correctly. So if you don't have enough insulin or if your cells aren't responding to insulin, you can't deposit glucose into cells. If anything, you would lose weight."

Weight loss research of many years still indicates that the safest, healthiest and most effective way to lose weight is to cut down on excess dietary fat while concentrating on grains, fruits and vegetables as the main component of the diet. The food pyramid was designed with these food groups at the bottom to symbolize that the majority of calories (55-60 percent) should come from these types of food.

Unfortunately, many people misinterpret these recommendations and find that they have grown fatter on a low-fat diet. Here are some of the mistakes they make.

They believe that fat-free means calorie free.

Having been told that they need to cut down on excess fat in their diet, many people assume that since carbohydrates are virtually fat-free, they can eat as much of them as they want and not gain a pound. In other words, people often think that fat-free means calorie-free. Therefore, they rationalize that having that second or third serving of rice doesn't count since rice is essentially devoid of fat.

They also apply this line of reasoning to bread, pasta and all sorts of cookies, cakes and crackers as long as they are advertised as being nonfat products. The end result is that they eat more than they need. What the body doesn't need, it stores away for future use. That's how a heaping bowl of pasta ends up as body fat around your abdomen, hips and thighs. Don't blame the pasta per se; blame the amount of pasta you eat.

FAT-FREE PASTA
0% FAT
LOW CARB

ALBERT RODRIGUEZ

The recommendation that 55-60 percent of one's daily diet should be composed of carbohydrates makes many people think that the majority of the food they eat should be composed of rice, bread, pasta, cereal, and other baked goodies. Not true. They forget that fruits and vegetables are carbohydrates, too. Only one-third of the 55-60 percent carbohydrate recommendation should come from starchy carbohydrates like rice. Two-thirds should be from fruits and vegetables.

Funny enough, many high-protein diet advocates don't realize this either. So you will hear them make statements like "I only eat protein, fruits and vegetables. I don't eat carbohydrates." Well, surprise, surprise, but they are eating carbs without them realizing it.

They don't make a distinction between refined and unrefined carbohydrates.

There is hardly any difference in calories between a refined carbohydrate like white rice and an unrefined carbohydrate like brown rice but there is a big difference in fiber content. Food that is high in fiber fills you up faster than food stripped of fiber. If majority of your starchy carbohydrates is from refined processed sources like white bread, white pasta, and low-fat but high-sugar products you are probably eating more than you need and you are depriving yourself unnecessarily of the fiber, vitamins and minerals that have been stripped away.

Not realizing that there is hidden fat in some carbohydrate foods.

A good example is pasta with Alfredo sauce because this cream-based sauce is loaded with fat. Fat is not automatically fattening in itself but since it contains more calories per gram (nine calories compared to four for protein or carbohydrates), small amounts can quickly build up to more calories than you need. Other examples of carbohydrate foods with hidden fats are croissants, doughnuts, French fries, and oil-popped popcorn. I remember one client who said she only had two small *pan de sal* for breakfast. She forgot to mention that sandwiched in between each *pan de sal* was one big slice of butter.

So just like the three little pigs did not have to be afraid of the big bad wolf, you don't have to be afraid of carbohydrates. Eat the right kind (more fruits and vegetables, more unrefined carbs than refined) and in the right quantities and you won't become the fourth little pig.

* * *

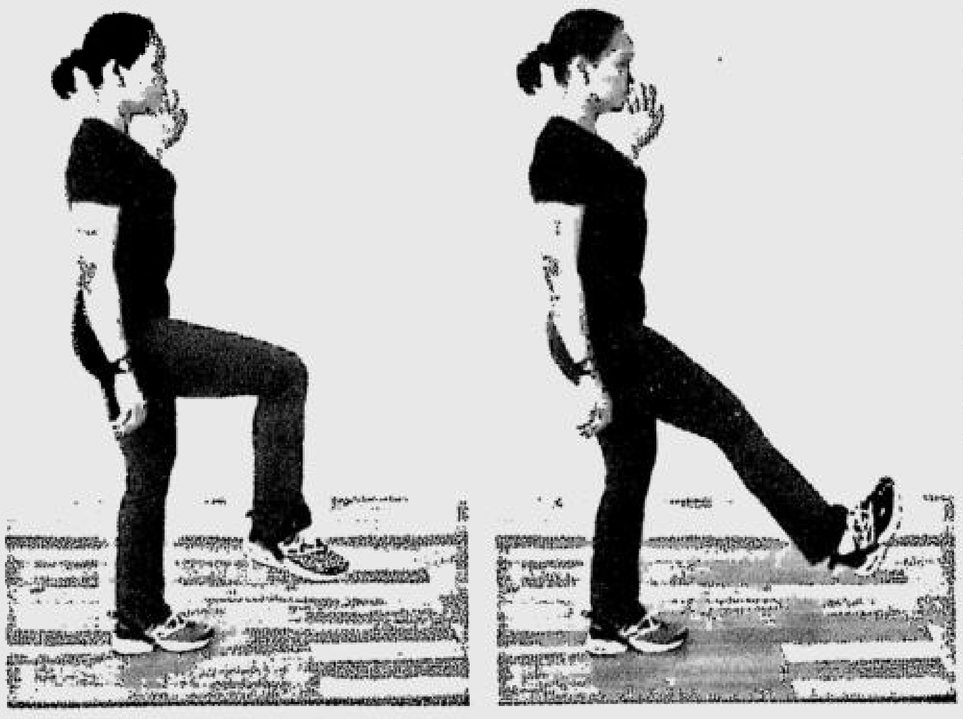
The Sports Medicine Association of the Philippines will hold its 11th annual convention titled "Global Trends and Local Issues in Sports" on May 17 and 18 at the Manila Midtown Hotel, Ermita. Call 521-9123 or e-mail sportsmedphil@yahoo.com.

The American Council on Exercise (ACE) exam will be held on July 27 and Nov. 9. To prepare, participants are encouraged to join the Basic Instructor Course and/or ACE Review Course by the Association of Fitness Professionals of the Philippines. Classes start on May 31. Call Doris at 850-7647.

Watch "In Fitness and In Health" on Studio 23, Mondays to Fridays, 6-6:30 a.m.

For past articles or exercises, go to www.tinajuanfitness.com

EXERCISE OF THE WEEK



Standing leg extension

STRENGTHENS and tones the front of the thighs (quadriceps).

Equipment:
Ankle weights (optional)

Exercise:

Stand with your feet hip-width apart. Hold on to a chair, a pole or the wall for balance. Contract your abdominal muscles. Keep your chest lifted and head up. Starting position is with your knee bent and lifted.

Straighten your leg by squeezing the muscles in front of the thigh. Bend and straighten the knee 12 times. Put the leg down and repeat 12 repetitions on the other leg. This makes one set.

Performance tips:

Keep the knee of the standing leg slightly bent so you don't put any pressure on your supporting knee.

Avoid kicking the foot out. Use the contraction in the muscles to initiate the movement.

Hold abdominal muscles in throughout the entire exercise. It is normal to feel some tension in the muscles of the supporting leg. They are working to stabilize your body as you bend and straighten the other leg.

Repetitions:
Do one to three sets.

Golf tournament benefits street children, abused women

THE DOÑA Gregoria Pedro Villareal Foundation Inc. will hold its 6th Invitational Golf Tournament at the Alabang Golf and Country Club today. Tee-off time is 6-9 a.m.

This special event is held every year to raise funds for the projects of the foundation like the "Bukas Palad Project" for street children of the Focolate movement, "Abused Women of Marillac Hills", "Tuloy sa Don Bosco Project", "Bathala Temple of the Philippines".and others.

Sponsors and benefactors are United Laboratories, Inc., Transnational Diversified Group and American Express Travel Adventures, Mandarin Hotel, Citibank, Century Park Hotel, Bobby Leonor, 7 Barracos Coffee and Coca Cola.

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Salesian priests want boy subjected to DNA test STORY BELOW, COLUMN 5

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BALANCED NEWS, FEARLESS VIEWS

WHAT'S INSIDE
- **Gov't closely watching rehab funds for South** NEWS / A2
- **Pantabangan Dam water level critical** ACROSS / A16
- **US, Russia OK nukes cut** WORLD / A11

Erap too rich for poor's lawyers

By Volt Contreras

SURE, he's *"Erap para sa Mahirap."* But he's just too rich to be their client.

So, all of deposed President Joseph Estrada's court-

ERAP/ A20

KUNG AYAW NYO... 'DI WAG!

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Deal overpriced by ₱6B

Serge Osmeña says energy officials may have rigged bidding

By Rocky Nazareno

IT'S bad enough that the National Power Corp. has to buy excess power at an exorbitant price from independent producers, passing this cost on to consumers in the form of hefty purchased power adjustment charges.

Now comes another overpriced Napocor contract.

Opposition Sen. Sergio Osmeña III yesterday said he had uncovered another grossly overpriced Napocor contract, this time involving its wholesale electricity spot market (WESM).

Osmeña called for a Senate inquiry into the alleged rigged bidding of the contract that Napocor and the Department of Energy awarded to the Swedish-Swiss firm, Asea Brown Boveri.

According to him, ABB was awarded the 25-year contract even if it offered a higher bid of $15 million as annual fee in managing the spot market.

The German firm Siemens offered a much lower bid of $9.6 million as management fee.

"For the duration of the 25-year contract, the government will be paying ABB a total of $135.325 million or P6.766 billion more as management fee. And this would be added to the PPA (power purchase adjustment) charge (to consumers)," Osmeña said.

Siemens and ABB were two of the foreign companies that prequalified for the bidding.

"There are reports that a DOE official exerted influence on the National Transmission Commission (Transco) to disqualify Siemens on the technical aspect (of the contract) and award the two-phase project to ABB," Osmeña said in his proposed Resolution No. 305.

"Alleged anomalies such as this will discourage potential investors in the energy industry and derail the full implementation of the electric industry restructuring," he added.

According to him, DOE and Napocor officials have seen fit

DEAL/ A20

BAD HAIR DAY, TOO MANY BARBERS: In the company of the Barbers of Surigao, Sen. Robert Barbers and his son, Rep. Ace Barbers, Surigao Gov. Robert Lyndon Barbers and Surigao City Mayor Alfonso Casura, President Macapagal on Tuesday makes a ceremonial drive through the newly inaugurated P20.976-million Sabang Bridge in Surigao City. VAL HANDUMON

2 water firms face Senate probe over high rates

AFTER soaking its customers, two private water utilities in Metro Manila could face a long, hot summer.

Sen. Ralph Recto yesterday called for a Senate inquiry into a revised agreement between the two private utilities and the Metropolitan Waterworks and Sewerage System, a government regulatory body.

Their original agreement signed in 1997 was revised last October, incorporating new provisions that allowed Maynilad Water Services Inc. and the Manila Water Company to recover their foreign exchange losses in the previous years through a round of rate increases.

Maynilad Water, owned by the Lopez family, was authorized last year to increase its water rates by P4.21 per cubic meter.

Manila Water, owned by the Ayala Group, was also allowed to raise its rates last year but only by P1 per cubic meter to recover its losses arising from

2 WATER/ A20

Question Imelda, Jovy urges

By Donna S. Cueto

INTERROGATING former first lady Imelda Marcos and her children may shed light on the alleged illegal fund transfers before and after the March 24, 1986 freeze on Marcos accounts in Switzerland, former Senate President Jovito Salonga yesterday said.

Salonga wants the Presidential Commission on Good Government (PCGG) to question Mrs. Marcos particularly on her admission that the government did not know of at least $800 million in Marcos money that escaped the freeze imposed by the Swiss Federal Council in March 1986.

He noted that Mrs. Marcos made the incriminating admission on March 27, 1998 but nothing was done about it.

QUESTION/A21

MARCOS MILLIONS

4 execs bound by bank secrecy laws

By Donna S. Cueto

(Fourth of a series)

FOUR highly placed individuals in Liechtenstein know about the $400 million in Marcos money stashed in the principality but are bound by bank secrecy rules.

A Canadian-English barrister, known only as Madame Z, identified the four as Peter Sprenger and Ulrich Siegfried of Limag AG, a member of the Credit Suisse Group, and Isador Kohler and Peter Herzog of KPMG, which provides financial services to high-level individuals.

The four could be questioned by Swiss, Liechtenstein and Philippine authorities about the transfer of Marcos funds from Switzerland to Liechtenstein just before the Swiss freeze order took effect on March 24, 1986.

Madame Z had worked with a Liechtenstein asset management company, and later with KPMG Fides that had knowledge of the transfer of the Marcos money from Credit Suisse to Limag AG in Liechtenstein.

In her initial "proffer" of evidence that her US lawyers furnished Malacañang, Madame Z said she came in contact with Kohler and Herzog of KPMG, and Siegfried and Sprenger in 1997 while she was employed by KPMG Fides.

Sprenger is currently the Speaker of the Vaterlandische Union, the largest party in the Liechtenstein Parliament (Landtag) until the 2001 election.

He was elected to the Landtag in 1997, according to an executive summary that David Chaikin, a lawyer and

4 EXECS/ A21

Media condemn crusading journalist's murder

By Hernan P. dela Cruz
PDI Mindanao Bureau

ANOTHER journalist in Pagadian City was killed on Monday night, barely a week after the commemoration of World Press Freedom Week.

The Philippine Press Institute (PPI) said Edgar Damalerio, 33, was the 38th journalist killed in the country since the mid-1980s. It said not one of these killings, including that of hard-hitting Pagadian broadcaster Olympio Jalapit Jr. in November 2000, had been solved.

Damalerio, managing editor of the weekly newspaper Zamboanga Scribe and commentator of RPN9-dxKP radio station, was gunned down by two yet unidentified men about 300 meters away from the city's police headquarters around 8:20 p.m. He was driving his owner-type jeep and had just come from a press briefing called by the Zamboanga del Sur Electric Cooperative Inc.

Policemen brought Damalerio to the nearest hospital, the Pagadian City Medical Center, where he died on arrival.

Witness Edgardo Amoro said Damalerio had a lone gunshot wound in the left torso. The bullet reportedly exited through the heart.

Ironically, the killing occurred just as publishers and editors of community-based newspapers nationwide were taking part in a forum on the media's role in politics and global terrorism. The PPI-organized forum was held at the Century Park Hotel in Manila on May 12-14.

Two witnesses who were with Damalerio told the INQUIRER that his assailants were waiting on a motorcycle near the Provincial

MEDIA/ A20

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PATERNITY ISSUE

Salesians want boy subjected to DNA test

By Armand N. Nocum
in Manila
and Cristina Arzadon
PDI Northern Luzon Bureau

THE SALESIAN missionary order has asked the mother of a 9-year-old boy allegedly sired by one of its priests to submit the child to a DNA test to establish paternity.

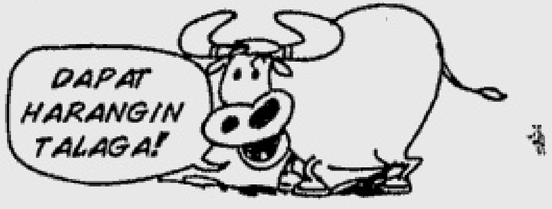
But the woman said she rejected the offer because it was premised on the arrangement that her son's alleged father, Fr. Nicanor Sta. Maria, would merely send a blood sample from the United States, where he is based. She expressed apprehension that Sta. Maria might send a wrong sample.

"I want the National Bureau of Investigation to do the test, with my son and his father giving specimens here. I want it held on neutral ground with our lawyers present," she told the INQUIRER yesterday.

The woman, now 33, also

SALESIANS/ A20

Second FRONT PAGE


DAPAT HARANGIN TALAGA!

Angara pushes bill vs 'pork'

INCUMBENT governments' practice of pumping billions of pesos in various guises, like pork barrel funds, into the coffers of favored candidates should be stopped, according to opposition Sen. Edgardo Angara.

In a statement, Angara said the enactment of the Campaign Finance Reform Act would do the job. Following a public hearing on the proposal, Angara noted that incumbent governments were "a major source of illicit campaign money, along with drugs, gambling lords, and vested financial interests."

He said the Senate committee on constitutional amendments, revision of codes and laws and electoral reforms, which he chairs, was "fast tracking the passage of the bill and its complementary measure—the Political Party Act." The two bills were in the centerpiece agenda of the recently concluded all-party summit.

Present election laws banned biddings on government projects and the hiring and transfer of personnel 45 days prior to the polls, he said. "But they do not prohibit the hiring of casuals, the release of money for 'training and capability-building," and other disbursements of state money that would benefit candidates of the ruling party."

Stopping this allocation of public money for administration candidates was also one of the best ways to prevent turncoatism, Angara pointed out. "It is a sad fact that elected opposition candidates almost always change parties immediately, anticipating guaranteed shares in the administration's resources."

Gov't closely watching rehab funds for South

MALACAÑANG yesterday said it had set up a strict monitoring system to prevent foreign funds intended to rebuild war-ravaged Muslim areas in the south from being used by local Islamic rebels to arm themselves.

"Under this process, there is very little possibility or little danger that such funds from private sources will go into military means," Acting Press Secretary Silvestre Afable told reporters.

Some opposition politicians have expressed concern foreign donations intended for building infrastructure and livelihood projects in Muslim-majority areas might end up being used by guerrilla groups to strengthen their military capability.

The local military has said a relative of Saudi-born militant Osama bin Laden helped finance the training and operations of local Muslim militants in the mid-1990s but disguised the funds as charitable contributions for constructing Islamic schools.

The United States has accused bin Laden and his al-Qaida network of masterminding the Sept. 11 attacks on New York and Washington.

President Macapagal Arroyo's government last week signed an agreement with the Moro Islamic Liberation Front calling for rehabilitation of communities damaged by a military offensive in 2000.

The accord was the second signed in recent months between Manila and the MILF following peace talks aimed at ending a decades-old Muslim separatist rebellion in the south.

The first accord called for a mutual ceasefire.

A final peace settlement remains pending as both sides still have to resolve the issue of ownership of lands previously occupied by Muslims but now in the hands of Christian settlers.

Afable said rehabilitation projects to be set up in areas affected by the Muslim conflict would be "strictly inspected, audited and continuously monitored as to their implementation."

"There are checks and balances in the system," he said.

About 800,000 villagers, mostly Muslims, were driven from their homes in 2000 when then President Joseph Estrada ordered a full-scale military offensive which resulted in the capture of about 45 MILF camps.

Afable said the refugees had already either returned to their homes or had started new lives elsewhere.

Local police last week arrested nine Muslim converts alleged to be members of a terror cell set up in Tarlac with al-Qaida-linked money.

The immigration bureau said the money was ostensibly to be used to build Islamic schools but investigation showed it was being used to train members of the cell and arm them. *Reuters*

No need for US engineers to stay beyond July

By Martin P. Marfil

THE PROPOSAL to extend the stay of American engineers appears to have been premature based on a study made by the two co-directors of the controversial Balikatan 02-1 military exercise.

The two, according to Brig. Gen. Emmanuel Teodosio, have agreed that there would be little need for extending the stay of American engineers.

The remarks came a day after Teodosio met with his counterpart Brig. Gen. Donald Wurster, in Zamboanga City.

In that meeting, they discussed the possibility of extending the stay of the American engineering battalion in Basilan.

Teodosio said they agreed that the projects could still be finished on time.

"We jointly came to the conclusion that the engineering projects can still be finished on time if the monsoon season will not come yet and the problem with construction materials is solved," Teodosio told defense reporters.

"We'll wrap up everything by July but there are things beyond our control, such as the weather," he added.

The proposal to extend the stay of the engineering battalion was first floated by Teodosio on Sunday after noting that rains have started to pour on the island where the manhunt for the Abu Sayyaf group continues.

The rains had turned the roads into mud and Teodosio said then that there might be a need to extend the deadlines for the projects.

His proposal was backed by National Security Adviser Roilo Golez who was quoted as saying that there won't be a problem if the stay of the foreign troops was extended.

Misuari arraigned today

By N. Bordadora

RENEGADE Muslim leader Nur Misuari will finally be placed in the custody of the country's courts today when he is arraigned by the Calamba regional trial court at a specially built courthouse inside the police's Fort Sto. Domingo in Sta. Rosa, Laguna.

Misuari, who has been detained in former President Joseph Estrada's former detention house inside headquarters of the PNP special Action Force since his arrest in January, will be arraigned on rebellion charges at 8 a.m.

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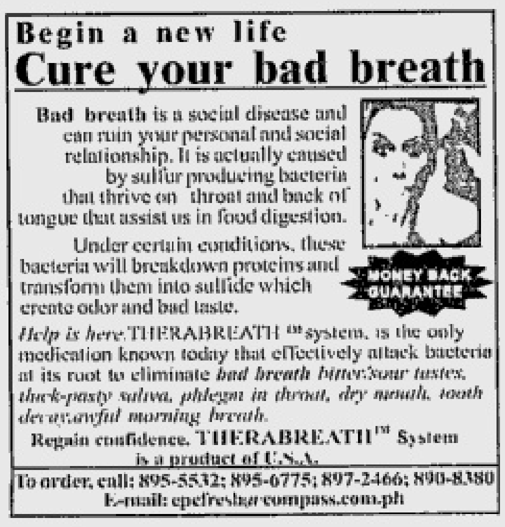
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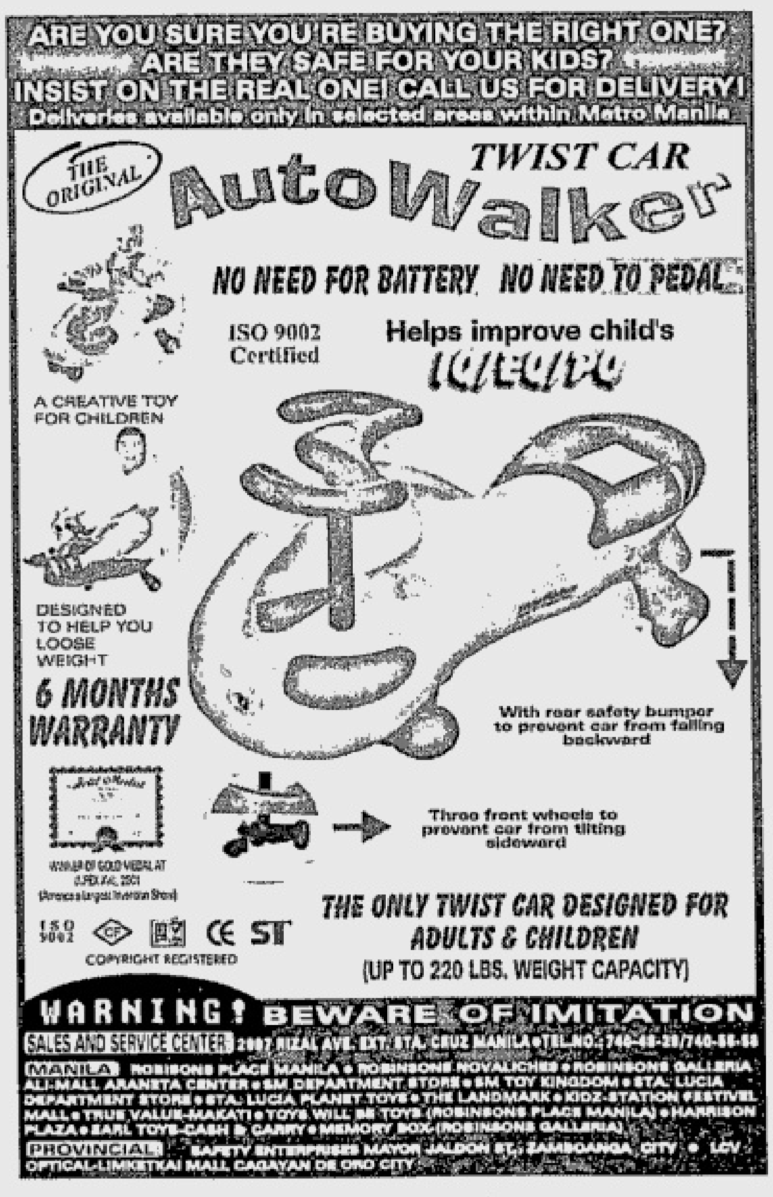
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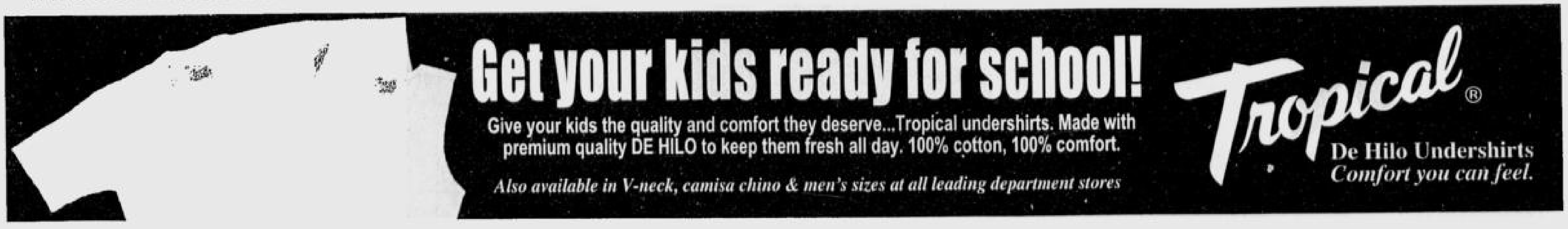
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'I TOLD YOU SO'

Tet wants VAT zapped

By Juliet L. Javellana

REPEAL VAT now!

In a privilege speech titled "The folly of VAT," Bataan Rep. Enrique "Tet" Garcia said there is "no sensible recourse but to immediately repeal" the 15-year-old Value-Added Tax in the face of an admission by the Department of Finance that it has become the most poorly collected taxes in the revenue system.

"After a dismal and dismaying 15 years, at last the government has publicly admitted that VAT has caused staggering revenue losses," Garcia said in a speech last Monday.

Garcia cited an INQUIRER report that the finance department estimated some P70 billion VAT taxes are not collected every year, leading to a tax leak of almost 50 percent.

The revenue loss, Garcia said, amounts to a "mindboggling P1.05 trillion" over the 15 years, or at least P700 billion on the conservative side.

A constant oppositor of VAT, Garcia said: "I told the government so."

Garcia said that when VAT was still being conceived, he already warned the government that it would reduce government revenues by P13 billion in its first year of implementation in 1988.

He said this was contrary to the "irresponsible and false claims of VAT proponents that it would increase collections by P2 billion."

Even as a neophyte congressman, Garcia said he wrote then President Corazon Aquino a letter asking her to recall Executive Order No. 273 which created the VAT.

"Gentlemen, the test of the pudding is in the eating. What a bitter taste!" Garcia said.

Garcia said VAT proponents also proclaimed then that it has a self-policing feature but now it is nowhere to be found.

"Except probably in the fantasies or pockets of the proponents," he said.

He said VAT proponents and apologists also said VAT would prevent the cascading of taxes, "another fantasy."

"It should be plain and clear that before anything else, with such tremendous tax leaks, there is no sensible recourse but to immediately repeal VAT," he said.

He said this is imperative because even President Macapagal-Arroyo expressed her opposition to VAT in her State of the Nation Address.

The President, he recalled, was for the adoption of the gross system of taxation or the sales tax which VAT replaced.

Garcia scored the finance department's flip-flopping on VAT. He said on April 29, finance officials broached the idea of repealing VAT but later changed its position to putting a cap on input tax credits instead.

"This is plain nonsense," he said. "Putting a cap on input tax credit actually means going back to the sales tax system so why not call a spade a spade and just repeal VAT?"

Garcia surmised that DOF had a "curious" position "because of strong pressures from what I call the tax evader's lobby."

"To maintain VAT is to retain the opportunities for corruption. In that connection, what reason could the Makati Business Club have in appealing the retention of VAT?" he asked.

Garcia urged the House, where all budget and tax measures emanate, not to wait for the Executive to initiate VAT's repeal.

Biliran solon fears cover-up by Coast Guard

By Joey A. Gabieta
PDI Visayas Bureau

MARIPIPI, Biliran—Rep. Gerardo Espina Sr. of the lone district of Biliran yesterday accused Coast Guard officials of attempting to cover-up the inquiry into the sinking of MT Nilodi after one of their personnel made the owner of the vessel sign a blank sheet of paper.

Espina, Majority Floor Leader of the powerful Commission on Appointments, called on Transportation Secretary Pantaleon Alvarez to conduct an investigation after he caught CPO Edilberto Makabuhay, a Coast Guard investigator from Cebu, in possession of a blank sheet of paper containing the signature of Alfredo Malanan.

His son, Gov. Rogelio Espina, said that by making Malanan to sign the blank paper, the Coast Guard could easily "twist" the entire scenario and then put the blame on Malanan.

"They (Coast Guard officials) are now starting (to dip) their dirty fingers here. Clearly, they have evil intent here," Governor Espina told the INQUIRER.

Coast Guard officials had accused local government officials, including Governor Espina of pressuring them into allowing the ill-fated motorboat to take in passengers in excess of its capacity.

Burned ship's crew, owners found liable

By Abigail L. Ho

THE SPECIAL Board of Marine Inquiry has recommended that administrative as well as civil and criminal sanctions be meted out to the owner, captain and crew members of the MV Maria Carmela that burned off the coast of Pagbilao, Quezon, last month.

In its report, the seven-man board suggested that the Maritime Industry Authority initiate criminal, administrative and civil charges against vessel owner Montenegro Shipping Lines and ship captain Godofredo Erandio if enough evidence could be found against them.

The ship's crew members also faced the possible revocation of their seaman's licenses as well as a one-year suspension from service.

These crew members include Erandio, chief mate Pablito Masangkay, acting chief engineer Blas Sevilla, 4th engineer Ricardo Moreno electrician Mario Isla and boatswain Jose Mario Reyes.

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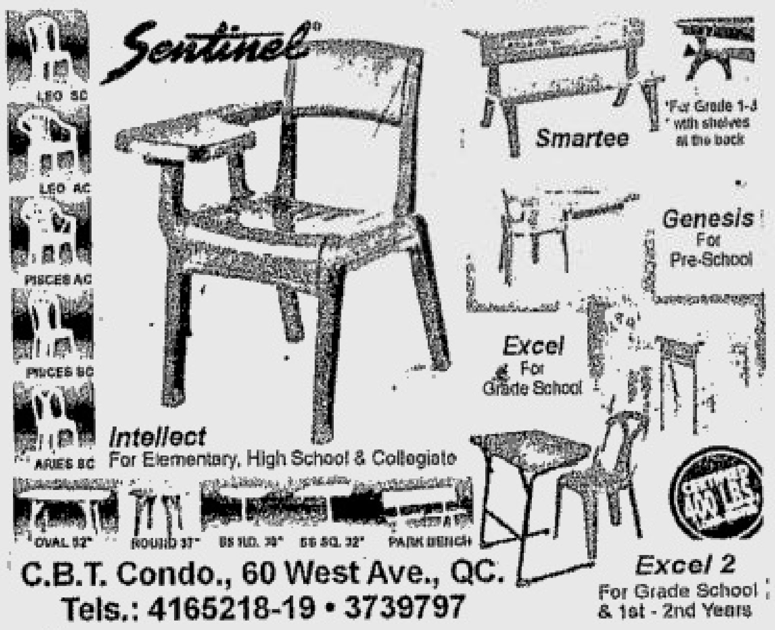

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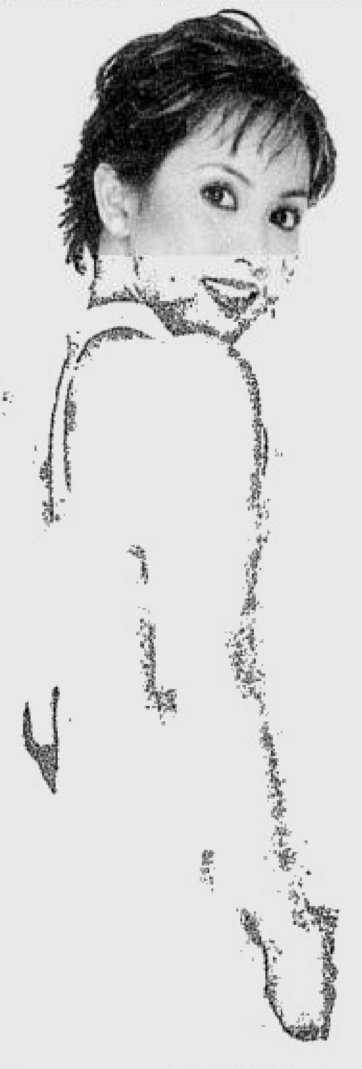

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Bishop accepts blame for ₱190-M Internet fiasco

By Armand N. Nocum

"WE'LL pay up."

The former president of the Catholic Bishops Conference of the Philippines embroiled in a P190-million Internet business scandal said yesterday he was taking responsibility for the whole mess. He assured creditors he had no intention of running away from his "moral obligation."

In a telephone interview with Church reporters, Dagupan Archbishop Oscar Cruz also said the CBCP, although it had no part in the transactions, was "supporting" all those involved. "They understand our situation," he said. "We were duped. I am personally liable."

In 1999, Cruz, who was CBCP head at the time, Bataan Bishop Honesto Ongtioco, and Monsignor Pedro Quitorio, set up an Internet service provider (ISP) company called CBCPNet, with business couple Eman and Mardie Lim. They called their company Twins Inc.

Eman served as chief executive officer, and Mardie was finance officer. Cruz was nominal board chair, and Ongtioco and Honesto were board members.

Cruz said the Lims were allowed to run the firm freely. Using CBCP connections, the couple allegedly borrowed heavily and opened 10 Internet cafes in the provinces, which later closed shop. Cruz also said that the Lims were able to sell thousands of CBCPNet cards without the knowledge of the three priests.

Last year, Cruz said, they discovered that Twins Inc. was already in debt by about P190 million, and that about 30 creditors were running after them.

Cruz said CBCPNet was meant to be the church's outreach vehicle, to evangelize and counteract sex, pornography and terrorism in cyberspace.

"We made a mistake," Cruz said. "I, for one, did not pay attention to the financial matters. Now we look like a bunch of disabled persons," Cruz said.

Last Sunday, the CBCP launched another network service provider called CBCP World. This time around, Cruz said, they will work hands on. To start with, the two new partners—Microcircuit Corp., a distributor of IBM computers, and Transpacific Broadcast Group International (TBGI)—were "thoroughly" checked.

Cruz said CBCP World profits will help clear CBCPNet debts.

Who paid for ad? PNP chief wants to know

THE PHILIPPINE National Police chief wants to know the identities of the officials behind a recent print advertisement against his replacement, Deputy Director Hermogenes Ebdane.

According to PNP spokesperson Senior Supt. Leonardo Espina, the order was given by PNP chief Leandro Mendoza in the wake of the advertisement, which indicated a split among its senior officials.

But for Espina, the ad did not bother the PNP.

"The chief has ordered an investigation. The ad is not bothering the PNP," he said.

"The PNP remains solid and united and remains focused on our job," he added.

The remarks came the same day that Ebdane said, in a radio interview, that the ad should be ignored.

"I hope that they would stop spending government funds (against me)," Ebdane, speaking in Filipino, said.

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Total Asthma Control Is Achievable According To Experts

The World Health Organization (WHO) Fact Sheet in 2002 reports that asthma, a common chronic disease, affects 150 million people worldwide. One in every twenty-five adults and one in five children suffer from asthma.

In the Asia Pacific Region, asthma prevalence has been steadily growing. According to a study called ISAAC (International Study on Asthma and Allergy in Children), the Philippines is well among the top three countries with the highest asthma incidence. Another survey, the Asthma Insights and Reality in the Asia Pacific (AIRIAP), which was conducted to better understand the experience of asthma sufferers, reveals that the Philippines is "missing the mark" when it comes to asthma control.

According to AIRIAP Filipino asthmatics are falling short of the goals for long-term asthma management. These goals are: 1) minimal or no asthma symptoms, 2) minimal asthma episodes or attacks, 3) no ER visits or hospitalizations due to asthma, 4) minimal need for quick-relief beta-2 agonist therapy, 5) no limitation on physical activity or exercise, 6) nearly normal lung function, and 7) minimal or no side effects from medication.

The study found out that up to 30% of Filipino asthmatics have daytime symptoms at least once a week and 26% are awakened by symptoms at night at least once a week; 61% reported sudden severe asthma episodes of cough, wheezing, chest tightness or shortness of breath in the past 12 months; 46% had been hospitalized or had gone to ER for their asthma in the past 12 months; up to 94 % are currently using short-acting beta-2 agonist quick relief medicines; and 45% are being limited by asthma in sports and recreation, 43% in normal physical activity, and 38% in social activities. In addition, lung function of these asthmatics were not being closely monitored. In fact, only 13% of those surveyed had a lung function test in the past year and only 4% had a peak flow meter. Only 1% used the peak flow meter regularly.

Achieving Total Asthma Control

Although asthma management in the country has fallen short of the goals, Filipino asthmatics can still attain these goals with sufficient education, regular monitoring and follow-up by healthcare professionals, and the availability of new preventive treatments that address the root cause of asthma.

The Council on Asthma, in their Philippine Consensus Report, and the Global Initiative for Asthma (GINA) agree that a partnership among healthcare professionals, patient, and the patient's family is critical for the success of asthma management.

One of the most important components of asthma education is helping patients understand what asthma really is. Majority of patients think that asthma is only about symptoms so they manage their symptom solely through symptom relief. But symptoms are only the tip of the iceberg. The bigger challenge in management is to address the underlying causes, which are airway inflammation, bronchial hyperresponsiveness, and airway remodeling.

Whether fast or gradual, asthma symptoms or attacks can be severe or may result in death in the absence of effective treatment. This can happen even if symptoms seem to be mild or even absent.

Aside from education, regular monitoring and frequent follow-up are likewise essential to total asthma management as attacks can happen rapidly or gradually, according to GINA. GINA also notes that whether fast or gradual, asthma symptoms or attacks can be severe or may result in death in the absence of effective treatment. This can happen even if symptoms seem to be mild or even absent. Given this, the patient cannot rely on his own assessment of his condition. "Patients with asthma are usually not able to recognize their symptoms and have poor understanding of the severity of their disease especially if their asthma is severe or long standing," GINA officials emphasized. It is therefore critical that the patient is closely monitored by his physician.

While the patient is working to control his asthma, frequent follow-up visits are necessary to review lung function, symptom records, techniques in using medications and effectiveness of measures to avoid risk factors. Measurements of lung function by the physician, in particular, provide a more accurate assessment of the patient's underlying condition.

The availability of new medications that help prevent asthma attacks and control the underlying causes of the disease play a big role in helping patients achieve the goals of asthma management. Millions of people around the world, including US and Europe, are now taking control of their asthma with the help of this breakthrough medicine.

Freedom from asthma!

To strengthen the efforts of healthcare professionals in bridging the gap between the reality of asthma in the Philippines and the goals of asthma management, GlaxoSmithKline Foundation, the public service arm of GlaxoSmithKline Philippines, Inc., launched the AsthmaFree Program. The program assists physicians in caring for their patients by providing free and continuing asthma education to patients, free severity tests, and regular one-on-one monitoring and counseling. The program helps the patient-physician partnership by providing doctors with regular reports on the condition of his asthmatic patients.

Asthma patients and their relatives may call the AsthmaFree counsel number 757-3693 (for Metro Manila) or 1-800-10-830-1000 (provincial toll-free) for more information about asthma, a free severity test to give the asthmatic an indication of the likely severity of his asthma, or to enroll in the program. Trained counselors are available to take calls every Mondays through Saturdays, from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

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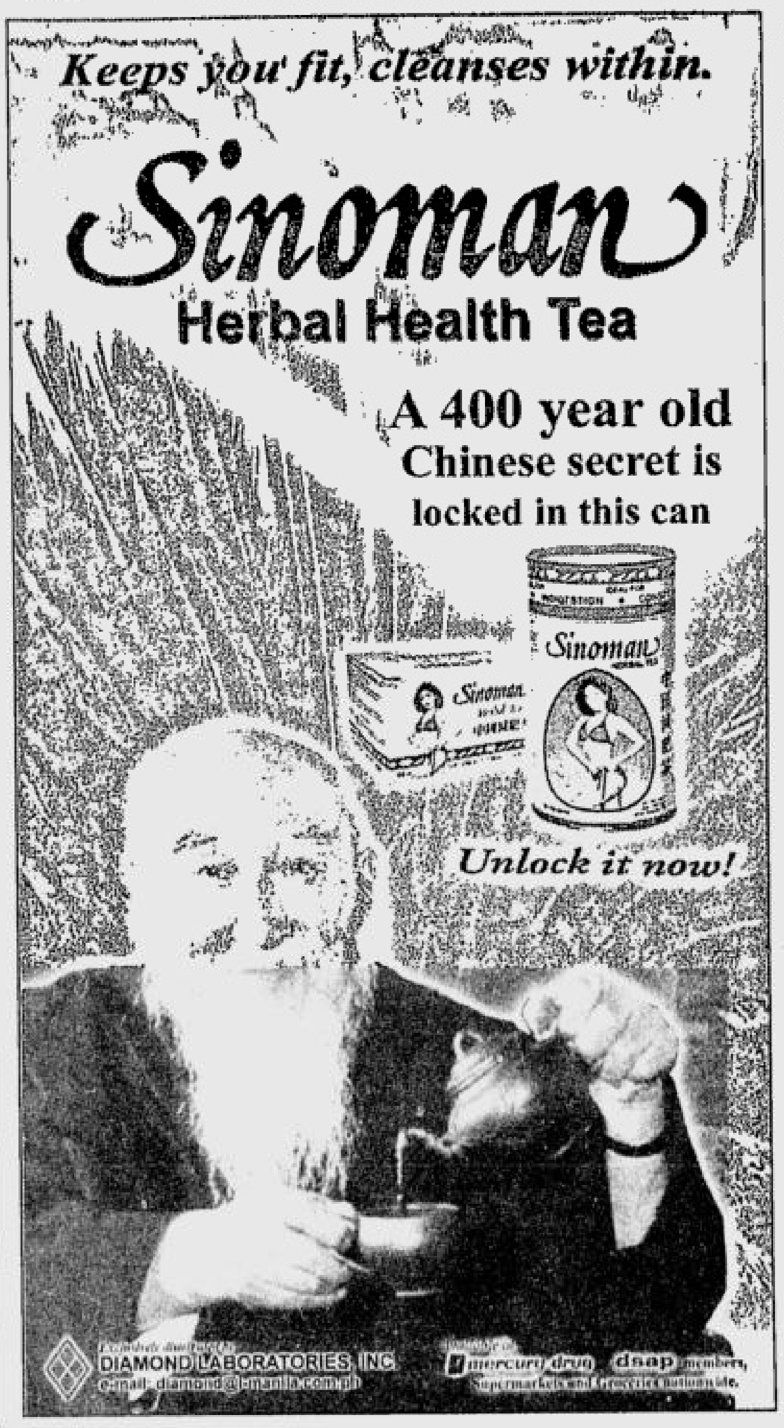

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Koreans barred from dentists' exams

By Michael Lim Ubac

DESPITE a court order favoring South Korean dentistry graduates, the Professional Regulation Commission (PRC) has barred them from taking the country's dental licensure examinations, which will start today.

A defiant PRC issued Monday a one-page memorandum junking the application for a dentistry license being sought by South Korean students who graduated from different universities and colleges nationwide.

"The board during their en banc (full court) meeting resolved to deny said applications pursuant to Section 17, Article IV of Republic Act No. 4419, otherwise known as the Philippine Dental Act of 1965, which requires that applicant for such application must be a Filipino citizen," the PRC said.

The memorandum was approved by board chair Claro B. Rayos del Sol and board members Ma. Rosario D. Achacoso, Antonio A. Baldemor, Estefania Blanche C. Barbers and Leonor T. Rosero.

The board ordered Perla D. Sayana, PRC's application division officer in charge, to implement the order immediately. The order will also affect Japanese, Chinese and Iranian dentistry graduates in the country.

The order was in defiance of a 20-day temporary restraining order issued by the Manila Regional Trial Court Branch 51 allowing foreign dentistry students to apply for licensure exams.

In a four-page order on May 8, Judge Rustico Panganiban issued the TRO to prevent "great or irreparable injury" to the foreign students, particularly to the 28 Koreans who sought the injunctive relief.

Panganiban also set the hearing on the petition for injunction on May 22.

Pending the hearing on the petition and "in order to preserve the status quo and so as not to render nugatory and ineffective whatever order may be issued on the application for the TRO," Panganiban ordered PRC chair Antonieta Fortuna-Ibe and other PRC commissioners not to implement PRC resolution No. 2001-22 issued on Oct. 9, 2001.

The resolution prevents the Korean students from taking the licensure exams for dentists from May 15 to 17, May 21 to 22, May 31 and June 1.

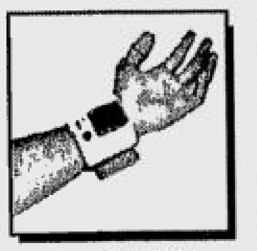
However, the TRO allowed them to take the exams "subject to compliance with the general requirements for examinees who will take the licensure examinations."

The petitioners, who are members of the Korean Dental Students Association (KDSA), filed their petition on May 3 to compel the PRC to allow them to take the local board exams and grant the licenses of those who already passed the board.

The Koreans, who obtained a degree in dental medicine from different schools in the country, said that they had complied with the requirements to qualify for the licensure exams.

However, they said that their applications "were denied and or not accepted by the respondents (PRC officials)." They said that unless respondents were restrained, they would suffer irreparable damages.

There are around 10,000 Korean students studying in different universities and colleges in the country. Of these, 700 are members of the KDSA.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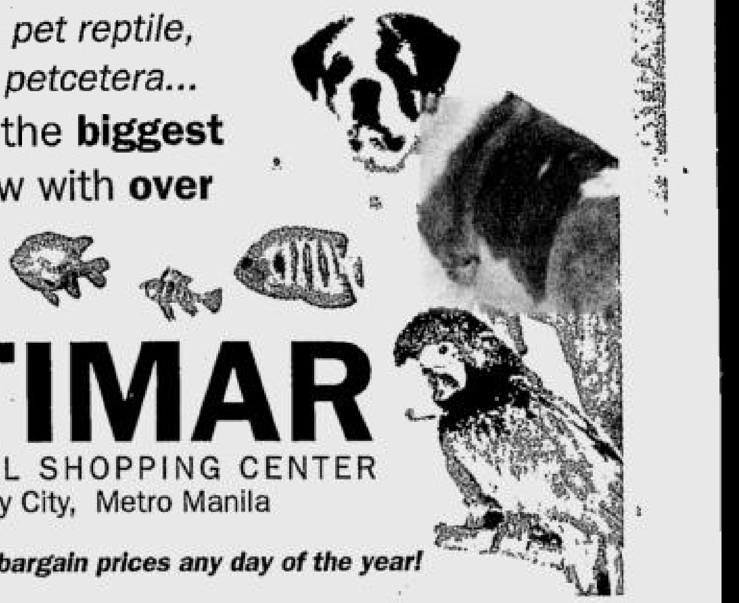
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Foes blame Benipayo for cancellation of meetings

COMMISSION on Elections chair Alfredo Benipayo is largely responsible for the Comelec's repeated failure to hold its en banc sessions, his detractors said yesterday.

This year alone, Benipayo was responsible for the cancellation or premature adjournment of 21 of the 39 scheduled en banc meetings, the four commissioners who comprise the majority at the Comelec clarified.

In a press statement, Commissioners Rufino Javier, Luzviminda Tancangco, Ralph Lantion, and Mehol Sadain revealed that it was the office of the chairman that was responsible for 54 percent of the cancellations recorded in the Comelec.

The majority commissioners said they were forced to issue the clarification following published statements last Saturday made by Benipayo's staff claiming it was they who had caused the delays in preparations for the upcoming barangay and Sangguniang Kabataan (SK) polls scheduled in July.

"We take strong exception to this misinformation being foisted on the public. Records show that as early as March 7, we already sent the chairman a memo to express our alarm over his arbitrary cancellations of en banc hearings," said Commissioner Sadain.

In addition, Commissioner Sadain said the allegation of Benipayo's staff that the non-appointment of new election officers will seriously jeopardize the July 15 elections is not true. That Comelec has always operated even when there are unfilled positions of EOs because there are election assistants to take their place.

Besides, the matter of appointing election officers is a matter which should be deliberated by the en banc based on evaluation reports from the Commission's Selection Board, he said. Earlier, Benipayo dissolved the old Selection Board created by the en banc and substituted this with a Board of his own creation. This is itself, according to the majority commissioners, deserving of serious concern.

EQUITABLE-PCI DEAL

Aide says GSIS chair was absent

By Michael Lim Ubac

AN OFFICIAL of the Government Service Insurance System has come to the aid of the GSIS Board chair who, along with 11 others, is now facing investigation for a questionable deal involving the use of P7.5 billion in state pension funds in 1999.

Engracio Alampay, chief of staff of GSIS Board chair Hermogenes D. Concepcion Jr., said his boss should not be included in the Ombudsman investigation.

In a letter to the Ombudsman, Alampay claimed that Concepcion was absent when the board approved the purchase of P7.5 billion worth of shares of the Philippine Commercial and International Bank (PCIB) by the GSIS.

Besides Concepcion, GSIS trustee Lenny de Jesus was also absent during the May 11, 1999 special board meeting, said Alampay.

Alampay then urged Ombudsman Aniano Desierto to spare the two from the investigation, saying "there is no legal basis for their inclusion in your investigation."

"In fairness to them and to protect their good names, it is requested that chairman Concepcion and Ms De Jesus be immediately excluded as respondents," he said.

Alampay said that he had already furnished Desierto's office with records showing that the meeting was chaired by GSIS President and General Manager Federico Pascual.

Pascual, who serves as vice chair of the Board in a concurrent capacity, took over as acting chair while Concepcion was away. "(He) affixed his signature confirming the validity of the proceedings," he said.

"He was not however included in the list of GSIS officials to be investigated. For the record... Chairman Hermogenes Concepcion and Ms Leonora de Jesus were both absent during the special board meeting where the supposed approval to purchase the PCI Bank Shares was passed upon by the board," Alampay said.

On May 8, Desierto ordered a preliminary investigation into the allegedly irregular purchase during the Estrada administration. He also ordered his investigators to place 10 top GSIS officials under investigation to ascertain if they personally benefited from the deal.

Desierto was acting on the criminal and administrative complaints filed by Rosendo A. Castillo, general secretary of the Christian Convergence for Good Governance, a non-government organization, against officials of the GSIS and the Equitable Banking Corp. and Equitable Banking Corp. Investments Inc.

CCGG sued the 11 GSIS executives for malversation of public funds and for violating the Anti Graft and Corrupt Practices Act and the GSIS Charter.

The Ombudsman Preliminary Investigation Bureau is handling the two criminal cases filed by the CCGG (graft and malversation), while the Ombudsman Administrative Adjudication Bureau (AAB) is handling the administrative case.

Castillo said the 1999 deal was accomplished with the alleged complicity of EBC president Wilfredo Vergara and EBCII chair George Go.

The allegedly "overpriced" and lopsided deal paved the way for the eventual merger of the Equitable Bank and PCIB, with the former as the surviving controlling entity.

Besides Concepcion and De Jesus, the respondents were executive vice president Reynaldo Palmiery, senior vice president for general counsel Manuel Crudo, senior vice president for the finance group Aurora Mathay and senior vice president for treasury Vicente Villegas.

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Cebu Daily News wins best edited paper award

THE INQUIRER'S provincial daily, the Cebu Daily News, won the best edited paper award in the Philippine Press Institute-Konrad Adenauer Stiftung Community Press Awards for 2001.

The Visayan Daily Star received the best editorial award while the Negros Daily Bulletin was cited for environmental reporting, the Mindanao Times for photojournalism, and the Mindanao Gold Star Daily for business and economic reporting in the daily category.

For the weeklies, Balikas was the best in environmental reporting, Sunday Punch in photojournalism, Sun Star Davao Weekend in business and economic reporting and in editing, and Bandilio ng Palawan in editorial.

The awarding ceremony coincided with the culmination of the 6th PPI National Press Forum at the Century Park Hotel in Manila last Tuesday.

RP construction workers in demand

By Armand N. Nocum

A TOP labor official yesterday said they are preparing a possible rise in demand for construction workers in US military and naval facilities worldwide, in spite of concerns of the dangers inherent in the job for Filipino construction workers.

Labor Undersecretary Manuel Imson said they see the possibility of sending more construction workers to US bases, as in the case of 200 Filipino workers sent to the US Marine Facility in Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, to build detention centers for suspected Afghan Taliban terrorists.

Imson recently came from a marketing mission in the US where he met with officials from the US State Department, Department of Labor and the defense department.

"I made them aware that we would want to reactivate our partnership with the US military facilities outside the US, to help them out with their bases. We are in the process of identifying where the opportunities are," he said.

But he clarified that the deployment to Cuba was not the first job order for US military installation. In fact, a local recruitment agency, Anglo European, has been supplying bases with construction workers for several years now.

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Lost at sea

EDITORIAL

MANY may be tempted to view the death of Josephine, the wife of Biliran ferry owner Alfredo Malanan, as karmic justice of unusual precision. She died last Saturday, one of 19 victims—all women and children—of the country's latest maritime tragedy.

Relatives described the owner of the 60-foot motorized outrigger boat MT Nilode as distraught, unable to speak to reporters because he was still in a state of shock. Many of us may have thought of Malanan's loss—even fleetingly, and not without a little guilt—as divine comeuppance.

We would be missing the point. Josephine's death teaches us, not that those who risk our lives blithely will somehow end up paying for it, but that in the end all of us risk our lives unnecessarily, unthinkingly. To put it in terms even the politician-averse officers of the Coast Guard can understand: we aren't safety-conscious enough, not even when our own lives, or those of our loved ones, are at stake.

The real reason that tragedies like last Saturday's accident off Naval, Biliran or last month's gutting of MV Maria Carmela continue to happen, then, is because our standards of safety are not objective, but subjective in the extreme.

The Nilode accident is an open-and-shut case. It demonstrates, almost too neatly, what happens when safety rules are violated with impunity. The overloading of the boat, up to or even beyond its 30-passenger capacity, is not disputed—not by the Coast Guard, not by the survivors, not by the ferry's surviving crew. One of the crewmen, in fact, recalled instructions being shouted to the passengers, which ordered them not to move too much; literally, not to rock the boat.

The immediate cause of the accident is also a matter of record: passengers riding on the roof of the central cabin stood up and moved over from the left side to the right when the afternoon sun broke through the clouds. In their attempt to seek some shade, the passengers immediately shifted the boat's center of gravity, causing the wooden ferry to turn over on its right. (A telling detail from our correspondents from the PDI Visayas Bureau: the passengers riding on the cabin roof shared the space with some 10 sacks of rice.)

The attempts of the Coast Guard to stop the boat from sailing are also not in doubt; there is even a so-called apprehension report, signed by Malanan, which the Coast Guard presented to him because of the marked overloading.

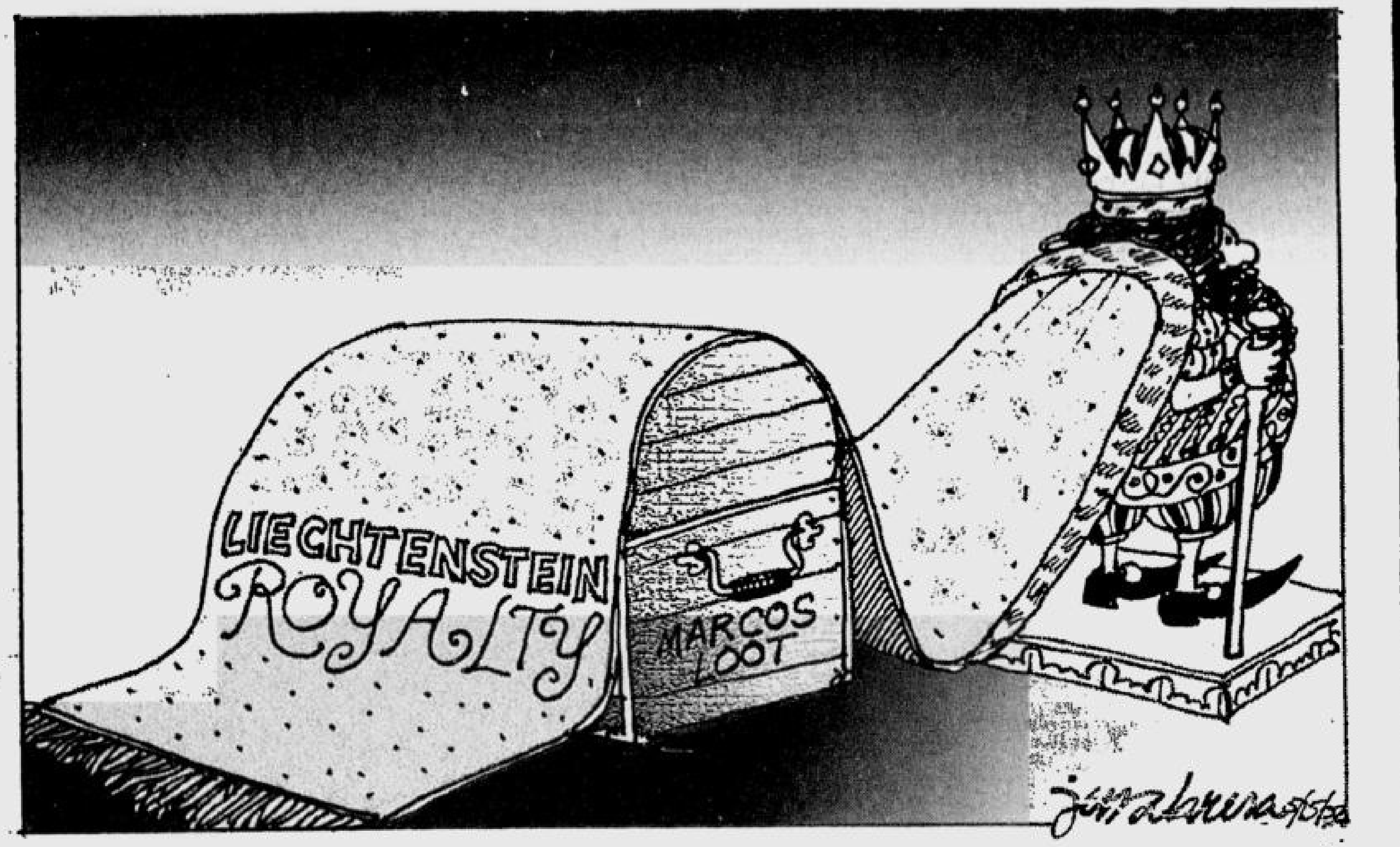
There is also no dispute about the casualty toll: 19 dead, 70 hospitalized, an entire province grief-stricken.

What needs to be determined is whether there were really local politicians who persuaded the Coast Guard officials to give the green light. Finding out who they were will not mitigate the Coast Guard's liability. But like the fact of Josephine's untimely death—it will help us face the reality of tragedy, Filipino-style. Our standards of safety are not objective, but subjective in the extreme.

Consider the Coast Guard's decision to give the go-ahead. A boat overloaded to thrice its approved capacity does not become less overloaded simply because a politician says so. A certified naval engineer may be able to argue the case for more passengers, although that is doubtful, but a politician? It is obvious that reasons other than those involving safety were what finally persuaded the Coast Guard to signal the green light. We do not know what they were; they may be as simple as a favorite politician assuring an officer that all would be well. But the consequences have been nothing less than tragic.

It is apparent that the Coast Guard officials manning the Naval outpost were made in the classic mold of the bureaucratic time-server. When lives were obviously at stake, they issued an apprehension report—instead of apprehending those dead set on risking life. When a local politician came calling, they revised their standards of risk and safety accordingly. When faced with the pressure to dispatch an overloaded vessel, they forgot their study of maritime science and their duties as public servants, and turned bureaucrat.

No wonder so many lives are lost at sea.



Anarchy in the streets

AS I SEE IT

Neal H. Cruz

LAST Monday, evening, there was a terrible traffic jam on Commonwealth Avenue, near Litex, after the Sandiganbayan building. It took a vehicle more than half an hour to negotiate that short stretch. Reason: sidewalk vendors.

Strictly speaking, they are no longer sidewalk vendors because they are not on the sidewalks anymore but out in the street—up to the middle of it, in fact. They are now street vendors. Both sides of Commonwealth Avenue are full of them. Only two lanes are left open to vehicles.

The traffic jams last all day and half the night. Those living in Fairview and environs have to spend hours hurdling that gauntlet twice a day at least. The perennial traffic jams are the reason the government is widening Commonwealth Avenue and building flyovers and underpasses. The taxpayers are paying billions of pesos for these public works improvements. But a horde of sidewalk vendors is all that is necessary to spoil the best laid plans of men.

What are the Philippine National Police, the Metro Manila Development Authority and the Quezon City government doing? Nothing. *Nada, Nyet, Wala.*

On the contrary, policemen and barangay officials are among those abetting the invasion of Commonwealth Avenue by the sidewalk vendors. These people collect *tong* from the vendors to allow them to sell their wares in the middle of the street. If the top officials of the PNP, MMDA and City Hall don't know this, then they must be really dumb. Why don't they all get in an air-conditioned van and drive up Commonwealth Avenue from the Quezon Memorial Circle to Fairview and see for themselves the anarchy reigning there?

At the corner of Commonwealth and Tandang Sora, near the McDonald's and 7-11 stores, they will see commuters standing in the middle of the street, in the middle of the intersection, under the flyover, waiting for rides. So that buses, jeepneys and taxicabs stop and block the intersection to load and unload passengers. And traffic on Tandang Sora backs up for kilometers, beyond Tierra Pura and the Muslim Quarter.

Where are the policemen and traffic enforcers? Nowhere.

A few meters beyond that, they will see the traffic jam near Luzon Avenue. Cause: Sidewalk vendors who have spilled out into the street. In fact, Luzon Avenue itself is filled with vendors, not just the sidewalk variety but permanent stalls encroaching on the street. Vehicles have to crawl single-file through the middle of the street, sideswiping pedestrians who are forced to walk on the street because there are no sidewalks.

Then our honorable officials will come to the traffic jam near the Ever-Gotesco mall because there is another intersection here and the stairs of the pedestrian overpass are on the street, not on the sidewalk. And, as usual, buses and jeepney stop in the middle of the street to load, unload, and wait for passengers, blocking the way of all the vehicles behind them.

The old traffic jam at the intersection of Commonwealth and Batasan Road, caused by the *talipapa* there, has been solved with the construction of the multi-million overpass-underpass complex there.

But after that comes the Litex anarchy caused by the vendors. Ironically, the QC government built another multi-million market for them nearby but the vendors prefer to sell their wares out in the street because it is free. Besides, they think that buyers in a hurry won't bother to go into the market but buy from them because they are nearer to reach.

And this is how commuters can help solve this growing anarchy by vendors and public utility vehicles. And it so easy to do. All they have to do is not buy from the vendors on the streets and sidewalks. Take the trouble to go into the market itself to buy what you need. And don't wait for rides in the middle of the street. Wait in the duly designated places. PU drivers stop at intersections because they see you there waiting for them. If they see you waiting at the waiting sheds instead, they will stop there.

The drivers, in turn, can train the commuters to wait for rides in the right places by stopping only there. Resist the temptation to stop for passengers waiting at intersections or in the middle of the streets. In Hong Kong, cabbies never stop for passengers hailing them just anywhere. They all drive straight to the proper waiting sections where passengers are waiting in line. The person at the head of the line boards the first cab that arrives. Everything is accomplished in a matter of seconds, and the lines move quickly and smoothly. If they can do that in Hong Kong, why can't we do that here?

The same anarchy by vendors and drivers, by the way, also bedevil commuters at Cloverleaf in Balintawak, also in Quezon City. Mayor Feliciano Belmonte, help!

And at Baclaran in Parañaque, the vendors have totally taken over the sidewalks and streets. The whole place is just one big *talipapa*. The authorities simply gave up trying to restore order. Why restore order when it so much easier and profitable not to?

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THERE'S THE RUB

Conrado de Quiros

I KNEW a parish priest once who was brilliant but never got beyond being a parish priest. At least he seemed brilliant from where I stood, which was barely five feet and in short pants. He was the moving spirit of our elementary school, which was the parochial (in more ways than one) school. Though we had a principal, who was a layman, he called the shots.

The parish priest seemed larger than life, which wasn't just the product of my looking at him from juvenile eyes. He had a prosperous girth, which I understood came from partaking of the bounties of this earth. Now and then, he came down the stairs flushed in the cheek, which did not owe completely to what seemed like strenuous exertion on his part. His jolliness suggested a more potent origin, like copious libation. On those occasions, he would banter with the schoolteachers, who were mostly women, some of whom were spectacularly beautiful, this owing completely to my looking at them from juvenile eyes.

But what made him even more larger than life was his capacity to hold an audience spellbound when he spoke. When God distributed oratorical skills, he was first in line. In the pulpit in particular, he was a man possessed, or in more Biblical terms, consumed by tongues of fire. His voice rang out even without aid of microphone. He was rhapsodic when he conjured the joys of heaven and terrifying when he warned of the pains of hell. You would almost think he had personally experienced both. Looking back, he probably did.

He was still a parish priest when I left for the big city. And he remained a parish priest till the day he died. I asked someone later why it was that he never became a bishop since he seemed eminently fit for it. "Didn't you know?" my source said. "He had a kid on the side, the product of an indiscretion, or ignorance of safe sex, in his younger days. That hounded him all his life."

Unfortunately, when God distributed passion for life, or worldly desire, he also stood first in line.

I remembered this amid all the talk of the sexual escapades, or deviance (not all of the dalliances being benign) of Catholic priests. I've often wondered if the Church itself did not lose out in the end by the exclusion of this parish priest from higher office. He might have made a good bishop.

One may of course always argue that it was his fault he did not become so. He yielded so easily to temptation, which showed a flaw in character. But it may also be asked from the other end if the test was not an unnecessary one. I myself have always wondered about the wisdom of the priestly vow of celibacy. It seems an artificial, archaic, and arbitrary act of cruelty against people who want to do good for their fellow human beings. The depth of the current scandal about priests succumbing to the lure, or call, of the flesh must suggest so.

At least in part. I grant sexual harassment and pedophilia will continue to happen whether you allow priests to marry or not. Which is what some of the priests in the United States are being accused of. Some Filipino priests are probably guilty of the same thing, except that their victims are too much in awe of the Catholic Church to wish to report their ordeal. That is a disease marriage cannot cure, assuming that marriage is a cure to anything.

I grant as well that missionaries, who live in what is often described as God-forsaken places, risking life and limb to spread the good news to the wretched of the earth, or trying to free them from the bondage of spiritual and physical powerlessness, are better off not having a family to worry about. There is no underestimating the capacity of marriage to "bourgeoisify," or drive people to live safe, conformist, and ultimately mediocre lives—the worrying about finances is the real killer—a fact priests, by the very nature of their heroic calling, can ill afford. Better a frequently contemplative position than, well, a missionary one.

But if so, then I should think it is best left a matter of choice. There is of course still another option, which is sex without marriage, but that may be far too radical for the Catholic Church. But I cannot see how flesh-and-blood individuals, however heroic and noble they choose to be, can be denied so basic a human need without inviting an inhuman effect. Some people have the capacity to sublimate that need, or yoke it to "higher" ends (though that presumes sex is base, which cannot be the experience of those who know how to raise it to aesthetic heights), others do not. Why make the proscription universal? Why decree it with a ferocity or inexorability worthy of the Inquisition itself? It makes no sense.

I remember in this respect the sermon of the priest at the end of the movie, "Chocolat." We tend to measure virtue, he told his congregation reflectively, by the extent to which we deny ourselves, by the zeal with which we shut off our senses from the wonders of the world. Maybe, he said, it was time we measured virtue not by what we scorned but by what we embraced, not by what we excluded but by what we included, not by what we endured by what we reveled in. His sermon was addressed to his flock, but it might very well have applied to himself too.

It might very well apply to priests too. Maybe the true measure of priestly worth is not the vows of deprivation he makes—the vows of poverty, chastity and humility—but the vows of acquisition he **can** make: the vows of enriching the soul, relating more fully with other human beings whatever form that might take, taking pride in one's work.

Of course one may always ask why that should be limited only to men, or why priests may only be men.

But, alas, that is another story, or column.

A preview of the constitutional convention

ANALYSIS

Amando Doronila

IT is incorrect to dismiss the all-parties summit on May 3-5 as just another exercise in blowing hot air that dissipated as soon as the conference issued its declaration.

At the very least, the summit crystallized "a strong sentiment in support of a constitutional convention" to be held simultaneously with the 2004 presidential and congressional elections to propose Charter change—not just amendments. The summit arrived at the consensus that the changes should be made by a convention like in 1935 and 1971, rather than by a constituent assembly (which is good for limited amendments), or by an appointed constitutional commission, as in 1987.

The summit pushed forward the date of the constitutional convention to 2004 despite known objections by the administration to an early convention that it argued would distract the energy of the nation from economic recovery efforts. This date would not throw off the rails the plans of President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo to seek reelection, since a new constitution drawn in 2004 will take effect at the end of a six-year full term, that is assuming she will be reelected. That is not a certainty now, at the rate she is being bashed and the unstable foundations of her administration.

The summit rejected the mode of constituent assembly because it would give advantages to sitting representatives and senators who, by declaring themselves constitutional delegates, would allow them to wear two hats and write into the Charter provisions that would bar it from seeking far-reaching economic and political reforms. The predominant mood in the summit was that the Constitution needed a shake-up from top to bottom, and no less than a convention can open it to various unrepresented sectors of society. True, members of Congress could ask their wives, husbands and children to stand for election in the constitutional convention, but there is less certainty that they would be elected to sew up the convention for the status quo. If the 1971 convention is a guide, the results of the election for the convention represented a breakthrough into politics of people who did not belong to any political dynasty. The extent of the breakthrough was such that traditional politicians from dynasties could not control the direction of the convention, much less the introduction of political and social reforms that were demanding incorporation in the Charter from a society churned by a deep social ferment in the late 1960s.

Then President Ferdinand Marcos, who desperately wanted to extend his elected term, could not get the votes to replace the presidential to the parliamentary system, and he had to declare martial law to implant a constitution that was not only authoritarian but also gave him a longer hold on power.

This time, the impulse for the switch to the parliamentary system, is one of the salient features of the all-parties summit, and it is important to note that it is driven not by an outside political force but by a growing consensus. Indeed, the issue of systems change has been given urgency by the experience of the gridlock flowing from the crisis of President Joseph Estrada who faced a powerful public demand for his resignation as a result of the scandals on corruption that engulfed his administration and of incompetence in economic management.

Among most nations of Southeast Asia, the Philippines is the only country with an American-style presidential system, with others following the Westminster system or its variations. We have a presidential system that Lee Kuan Yew of Singapore noted was prone to gridlock, and nothing can be more emphatic in disclosing this deadlock than the constitutional crisis of the Estrada regime. The political paralysis that befell the nation from the collision between the demand for Estrada's resignation and his argument that he was constitutionally elected with a six-year term has clearly given further push to the parliamentary option.

One outstanding flaw of the present presidential system, following the dismantling of the two-party system in 1972 by President Marcos, is its replacement by a multi-party system mandated by the 1987 Constitution. Parties develop of their own accord, fostered by the political environment. Under the multi-party system, the vote was so fragmented that we never had a majority-elected president after President Corazon Aquino. President Fidel Ramos was elected with 34 percent of the popular vote, and Estrada with 40 percent.

The French, who have a quasi-presidential system that overlays the parliamentary structure, have a formula for avoiding the problem of a non-majority president—the run-off after the first round in which the first two candidates who poll the most number of votes compete in the final round.

Flexibility to avoid the disastrous impasse, that forces people to go to the streets to end a government, through extra-electoral means is probably the message of Prof. Jose V. Abueva's finding that 43 percent of Filipinos disagreed with the statement that "On the whole, I am satisfied with the way democracy works in our country, while only 32 percent agreed."

From what I saw in the summit, the debates there were a preview of the issues that would highlight the debates in the convention. The promising aspect of the summit is that it engaged in informed dialogue not only politicians but also academics, business leaders and civic leaders.

One with the franchise

AT LARGE

Rina Jimenez-David

AT MIDNIGHT, my family and I will be trooping to Robinson's Cinema I at the Galeria for the sneak preview of "Star Wars Episode II: Attack of the Clones."

Actually, it will be my second time to watch the movie, having been invited to the special screening for the media last Saturday at the same theater. But it so happened that our two children could not join us due to conflict with their schedules. So I took the chance, while chatting with personnel from Robinson's Cinema World, to reserve tickets for the midnight screening.

Officially, "Star Wars Episode II" opens tomorrow. But as with any other blockbuster movie with a "pre-sold" franchise—and no other movie franchise can get bigger than "Star Wars"—local theaters offer a midnight screening to fans eager to score "bragging rights" to having seen what is expected to be the year's biggest movie before the rest of the *madlang pipol*.

But why would I bother to watch a movie that will keep me up until about 3 a.m. when I've just seen it? Well, in my family, you don't watch a "Star Wars" movie just once. In fact, we have a special boxed VHS set of the first three movies and we have watched these over and over. The first time I watch a "Star Wars" movie, as I did last Saturday, it's basically to get a sense of the plot and characters and be dazzled by the special effects. The second time, it's to better appreciate the special effects and to get the names, places and technology down pat. The third time, it's to place the serial in the context of the rest of the "Star Wars" mythology. And compared to my children, I am just a dilettante in the "Star Wars" world. My son and daughter already have the basic outlines of the "Clone Wars," which in Episode Two are just beginning, imbedded in their memory circuits. They also know the genealogy of Luke and Anakin Skywalker through several generations.

* * *

SO you can imagine the weeping and gnashing of teeth in our household when they discovered that they couldn't make it to the Saturday screening. We were strictly enjoined from discussing the movie. "You can mention the characters and some events, because we already know the history, but you can't go into too much detail," the 16-year-old instructed. Even then, it was difficult to keep one stray detail or another from spilling out.

"Star Wars" is as much a part of our family history as our increasingly decrepit home is. Looking back, it seems an auspicious time to have started a family, movie-wise. George Lucas, Steven Spielberg and other young filmmakers had just begun their careers, giving young parents like us ample opportunity to take our toddlers to movies we knew they'd enjoy, while enjoying the movies ourselves. While we did sit through many a Walt Disney animated film, or, in the case of my daughter, seemingly endless Aiza Seguerra starrers, we were lucky to have a regular supply of "Indiana Jones," "Superman," "E.T.," "Close Encounters," "Batman," and of course "Star Wars."

The plethora of "Star Wars" action figures, laser swords, books, magazines, memorabilia cups and glasses and all sizes of T-shirts testifies to our family's obsession. Miss out on Episode II? Might as well renounce our family name!

* * *

SO, what am I authorized to tell you now of "Episode II: Attack of the Clones?"

Reviewers in the United States have touted the movie as "the best" yet of the franchise. Indeed, I haven't seen so many Jedi gathered in one place, battling so many clone-soldiers and future Storm Troopers with their multi-colored laser swords. And really, Yoda Rules! But in my heart, "the best" of the Star Wars movies will always be the first, when the concept was fresh and the very idea of walking, talking androids named C3PO and R2D2 was audacious and riotous.

"Episode II" tries to simultaneously keep true to the techno-sweep of the franchise while deepening the characterization, a weakness that plagued previous Star Wars outings. We do see Anakin taking the initial fateful steps that will lead him to the Dark Side, adolescent hubris chafing under the demands of discipline and detachment that every Jedi must serve. But in trying to show Anakin's humanity by his deepening attraction and attachment to Padme Amidala (the teenage Queen of Naboo in Episode I), the movie falters into cheap sentimentality. And why is it, in the Age of Computer Imaging, Lucas chooses to situate the love scenes against backdrops of cheesy air-brushed landscapes that remind one of those early-afternoon Flash Gordon serials?

* * *

MY advice to those dismayed by these distressing digressions from the pulsing action-driven plot: Keep the faith. The "Star Wars" spirit prevails in the end. The battle scenes, when the political intrigue and the espionage are done with, are bracing and exciting. And R2D2 and C3PO, despite being relegated to minor roles in the film, do manage to add their inimitable touches of humor and "humanity."

What's most remarkable about "Attack of the Clones," and the rest of the "prequels," I dare say, is that even as we all know how it'll end, we still care about the outcome of each episode. In one scene, Obi Wan-kenobi tells his apprentice Anakin in exasperation: "You'll be the death of me yet." The audience laughs at such ironic prescience, for indeed, it will be Anakin, as Darth Vader, who will make Obi Wan-kenobi "one with the force." But such is the power of the franchise that even as we know the young Anakin will turn into an arch villain, while he's still a Jedi-in-the-making, we take him to our hearts.

Filipino films and censorship

LOOKING BACK

Ambeth R. Ocampo

NICK de Ocampo, I have always known as a maker of alternative films and an organizer of film festivals, thus it was a pleasant surprise to know that he has been hard at work on a multi-volume history of film in the Philippines. Although there have been a handful of books on Philippine cinema, usually compilations of film reviews, scripts, historical studies etc., we have yet to see a book detailing the development of film in the country since the first silent films were shown in the Philippines at the close of the 19th century to both commercial and independent films made today.

At the close of a fruitful and stimulating chat De Ocampo presented me with a compilation of his screenplays which I shelved together with my modest collection of books on film. Since I hardly use this section of my library, De Ocampo's book gave me an opportunity to dust all the film books and browse through the pictures. I eventually peeked into "Film and Freedom: Movie censorship in the Philippines" by the late Guillermo C. de Vega, who I remember from my martial law childhood as the man who was shot and killed inside a Malacañang toilet. After reading his brief history of movie censorship in the Philippines from the first Board of Censors in 1929 to the time he took over as chair of the Board of Censors for Motion Pictures (BCMP) in 1974, I relaxed by going over the pictures in the center of the book.

The black and white still pictures of then controversial films like: "Perlas ng Silangan" (where FPJ and Susan Roces seem miscast as mestizo and mestiza Muslim lovers attired in costumes fit for the Bayanihan dance troupe), "Iginuhit ng Tadhana" (where Luis Gonzales plays Ferdinand E. Marcos as lawyer, guerilla, and rising politician), "Urduja" (where Amalia Fuentes plays the amazon queen opposite the mestizo Zaldy Zshornack who is also miscast and painted soot-black to simulate a *negrito* or *baluga* complete with bow and arrow), "Ransom" (where a slimmer and younger Erap is shown, pistol in had jumping from a rooftop), etc. These still photographs were historical in the sense that all the stars have since aged.

What was more interesting was the fact that we have not just changed in terms of fashion—thank heavens bell-bottom pants, polka dot prints, afro-hairdos and thick sideburns are a thing of the past—even our tastes and perceptions have also changed. De Vega's appendix gives us the 1962 criteria of objectionable movie scenes as follows:

"1. Scenes which show sex acts, excessive and lustful kissing, lustful embraces, suggestive postures and gestures; 2. Scenes which show adulterous or unmarried sex relations unless necessary to the plot in which case they must be merely hinted at; 3. Seduction or rape scenes should never be more than suggested and only when essential to the plot; 4. Treatment of bedroom scenes should be governed by good taste and delicacy; 5. Excessive profanity of expressions, songs, jokes, references and gestures; 6. Dances with indecent and excessive movements should not be shown in full; 7. Partial or complete nudity if coupled with an independent aspect of indecency; 8. Brutal killings and excessive cruelty to men, women, children, as well as animals are not to be presented in detail; 9. Methods of crime, theft, robbery, safe cracking, dynamiting of trains, and other similar acts of crime should not be depicted in full detail; 10. Traffic in drugs must not be portrayed in such a way as to stimulate curiosity concerning the use of which."

If the above rules were still in force today, we would be left with nothing on TV and movies except "Mary Poppins" or "Sound of Music." I could not help but laugh at the way movies were censored 40 years ago. In 1971 Ferdinand Marcos also gave his own 10 commandments and asked that the following be censored:

"1. Scenes depicting the sexual act; 2. Scenes exposing the reproductive organs; 3. Scenes exposing pubic hair; 4. Scenes of self-abuse or self-manipulation; 5. Scenes showing any form of manipulation of the mammary gland or the reproductive organs; 6. Scenes fully exposing the human anatomy whether for a prolonged or fleeting moment; 7. Scenes demonstrating the use of LSD or similar narcotic drugs for evil or anti-social purpose; 8. Scenes of gruesome and gory killing, showing for more than two seconds bloodied faces or hacked or disjointed parts of the human body; 9. Scenes or complete films glorifying criminals or condoning crimes as may be judged by their having at their end no redeeming social message or retribution; and last but not least; 10 Scenes using profane or indecent language, not normally heard in polite conversation, and irrelevant or extraneous to the plot."

Films, when viewed many years after they were made, become pieces of the historical puzzle. They are not just a form of expression but become a mirror of our life and times. What was considered good, bad, or tasteless in the past may be ordinary in the present and vice-versa. In this sense, movie censorship is one way a historian can understand the temper of past times and that of our own.

* * *

Comments are welcome at ambeth@admu.edu.ph

My brother, my hero

HIGH BLOOD

Albert Grupe

WE'D also like to know the concerns of the sixtysomething and above, what makes their blood pressure rise or makes them sit back, content that all's well with their world and with themselves. **—Ed.**

I REMEMBER Joe, my elder brother who built a tree house on a huge acasia tree at the back of our house in Iloilo. At the age of 12, he killed a snake while climbing the tree, embalmed it, artfully made it climb a branch he set in a cement base and placed his trophy right beside my bed. Boy, did I hate snakes after that. I discovered insomnia at the young age of 9.

As we became teenagers in Manila, Joe would gatecrash parties just to make sure I was okay. And a few years ago, he wanted to fly all the way from Australia to help me out of a problem.

But to me, Joe's most heroic act was his accepting Jesus' gift of salvation. Here was Mr. Macho having his own Hero to worship. He realized that the most macho thing anyone could ever do was what Jesus did on the cross to save us. Joe knew that if he was the only person on earth, Jesus would have gone to the cross just for him alone.

During our reunion last February in his place in Matuod, Batangas, our two sisters and I joined him in his favorite ritual, admiring the sunset. To Joe, the most beautiful time of the day was the most beautiful sunset in the world in Matuod. There, I saw my brother, my hero "ride off into the sunset" like Shane, the great western hero of our time. Joe was well on his way to join his Hero forever. In the sunset of his life, the doctors gave him six months to live. God gave him almost 10 years!

Last April 24, we laid his ashes to rest at his favorite spot on the beach, near Talim Point, some 3 kilometers from where he watched the sunset. My brother, my hero, is now home with his Hero. He now enjoys a much better view of his favorite sunsets in a place where there is no more death, nor pain and where our Hero will wipe away our tears forever.

Well, Joe, from now on, I will greet you in every sunset. Hello and goodbye...until we meet again in that grand reunion in the sky, where we will serve and worship our Hero forever.

Albert Grupe, 61, retired from advertising five years ago and is president of Galleria Crafts which exports handicrafts to the United States, Europe and Asia.

'Banaba' and my prostate

Amado Gat Inciong

THERE is a cheap and safe way to manage a non-cancerous enlarged prostate, otherwise known in medicine as a "prostate condition."

Six years ago, at age 65, I began experiencing pains, often very severe, while urinating. Also, urinating became abnormally frequent. I consulted a doctor, a specialist in internal medicine. He said I had a "prostate condition." Through biopsy, he got a sample of my prostate for testing. Reading to me the test result two days later, he said: "The result is positive. If it is not cancerous yet, it can develop into one."

I was immediately advised to take Proscar (a tablet) once a day, which cost P19 each at the time. The last time I took it a year ago, it was more than P30 each. The price increased every time the value of the peso dipped in relation to the dollar. Proscar, I was warned, would kill the pain—and it did—but it would not cure the disease. Worse, continued administration of Proscar, I was told, would result in impotence. The only cure to cancerous enlarged prostate? Surgery, which must be done soonest.

Being a logical positivist, I did not take my doctor's opinion as final. I went to another hospital and consulted another doctor. I thought I would lose nothing (except a few pesos) by getting another opinion. Again, I was biopsy-ed. The result, which made me happy no end: Negative. My prostate condition was not cancerous.

Lesson: Always get a second opinion. Even a laboratory test, at least when it comes to a prostate condition, is not conclusive.

But, to kill the recurring pain, I continued taking Proscar once a day before bedtime for five years.

Then about a year ago, at an agribusiness fair at the Philippine Trade Center along Roxas Boulevard, I was handed some literature about Banaba leaves. One piece said Banaba leaves contain insulin, which brings down blood sugar level and, therefore, good for diabetes. Boil seven mature Banaba leaves in five glasses of water and drink the liquid anytime you feel thirsty, says the piece.

I was at Stagira Resort in Pililla, Rizal when I tried the Banaba drink. There are many Banaba trees in the resort area. I had seven Banaba leaves boiled in five glasses of water, then the leaves were taken out and thrown away. Left was a golden-looking liquid, which I thought would help abort my diabetic tendency.

Fortunately or unfortunately, I failed to bring Proscar tablets to the resort at the time. In the evening I drank two small glasses of the Banaba drink. I slept uneasily, assailed by apprehensions that having failed to take Proscar before going to bed for the first time in five years, I would encounter excruciating pain when I empty my kidney in the morning.

But when I did urinate in the morning—surprise of surprises—there was no pain at all. Even the slight pain I used to experience when urinating under the influence of Proscar was gone. To celebrate the miracle, I had a glass of red wine in the evening an hour after my last glass of the Banaba drink. In the morning, urinating was a pleasure.

For over a year now, I have completely dropped Proscar. In its place, I have been taking, as I still religiously do, Banaba drink produced by boiling seven mature Banaba leaves in five glasses of water for 10 minutes or more. Refrigerate the golden-looking drink or pour it in a big glass full of ice cubes.

It is not only cheap and safe but also delicious—especially in summer.

Mr. Inciong is former Undersecretary of Labor and chair of the committee which drafted the Labor Code (PI) 442 and its implementing rules. Today, he is a student of globalization, about which he writes, including frequent letters to the editor.

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LETTERS

Resolving the conflict over responsible parenthood

RINA Jimenez-David's two-part column on natural family planning and the Church (PDI, 4/26-27/02) reflects the common dilemma underlying the conflict between Catholics and their Church regarding the issue of responsible parenthood.

Ms David stated that "apparently, the hubby and I were to have no say on how many children we were to raise and nurture... churchmen apparently believed the couple is little more than a conduit for conceiving, birthing and raising future Catholics."

Indeed, the thought that couples ought to have as many (or as little) as God will give them is an idea that modern culture rejects, finds shocking, outdated and too restrictive. We definitely have a problem with accepting ideas contrary to our own and we have an even more difficult time submitting our will to that of others, in this case, God's—more so when it is inconvenient and demanding on our part. Human nature being what it is, we would rather make the rules than play by them. But when it comes to issues such as humanity, morality, conscience and sexuality, it would seem highly illogical for creatures to play god.

Contrary to Ms David's assertion, the number of children a couple ought to have does not depend on priests. Priests offer only counsel and sound advice regarding the teachings of the Church. Ultimately, the responsibility rests on the shoulders of the spouses, who must make the decision facing God. This decision must be imbued with generosity and sacrifice, which are the touchstones of true love. Moreover, the decision to have or not-to-have must be made with reflection, prayer and an upright and well-formed conscience, respecting God's laws—which are there not for added misery but for our own enlightenment and guidance—handed down to us through the Church.

But to make the right decision, we must know the real score. Natural family planning is not the official Catholic contraceptive. Many wrongly believe that, since artificial contraception is frowned upon by the Church, then natural family planning is the way to go. Not quite...because NFP should be used only when serious financial, physical or psychological reasons exist. The tremendous good a child brings into the family is immeasurable and unrepeatable, such that serious reasons must exist to justify its temporary delay.

Children are gifts of God. The problem is that sometimes, children are seen not as blessings but merely as a burden on one's pocket, patience and lifestyle. Thus, the need to lessen or remove the chances of getting one as much as possible, be it through natural or artificial means.

Only when a child is considered to be a gift rather than a curse can couples truly open themselves to life. Ultimately, it is this generosity that multiplies time, talent, creativity and resources. As the popular saying goes, a child comes into the world holding a loaf of bread. God provides.

The problem nowadays is not so much that men are irresponsible parents but perhaps, at times, we are too "responsible," too calculating, with too little generosity, too much dependence on ourselves and too little trust in God's providence.

And that, in the end, Ms David is probably what that priest meant when he said: "That's the wrong answer! Your answer should be: How many God will give us!"

It was not a command to do away with your freedom and intelligence. Rather, it was an invitation to use them generously, with the trusting confidence of children of God.

—STEPHANIE C. OLIVARES,
Ayala Alabang Village,
Muntinlupa City

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Is it martial law days again?

SIXTY years ago, I came to the Philippines with a commitment to work for the welfare of the Filipino people. I have shown this commitment through my solidarity with the underprivileged sectors of society and my support to the protest movement, whenever their basic rights are violated.

Now I am told that a foreigner who joins protest activities its to be considered a "threat" to national security, public order and the national interest, and can therefore be arrested and deported. This, according to BID Commissioner Andrea Domingo, who issued the directive as reported (PDI, 5/1/02).

I am shocked, and wonder by whose authority this highly discriminative and fascist order was issued. Are we back again under martial law? Under the Marcos regime I was declared an undesirable alien for forming protest actions and demonstrations, and was advised by his commissioner on the Bureau of Immigration to leave the country voluntarily, if I didn't want to be deported. It was tantamount to deportation, anyway, because the reentry permit issued to me turned out to be fake upon my return to the country—after strong pressure on the regime—I vowed to join the struggle for liberation until the removal of the hated dictator and company.

Is Commissioner Domingo only interested in foreigners who come to promote the dollar-producing tourist industry or bring in capital investments into the country?

Even at present with the US military forces all over the country, I will join the protest rallies. Let the people judge which foreigner is a greater threat to national security. In conscience, I believe I am more peace loving than any nationalist government or political party that allows these forces to come in and protect our security.

—ARNOLD VAN VUGT, Horeb Center, P.O. Box 237, Cagayan de Oro City

The decline of the Aglipayan church

AS an addendum to the "Aglipayan irony" written by Ryan Josef Calauor (PDI, 11/17/01), allow me to cite numerous events which hastened the decline of the Aglipayan Church.

Two words can sum up the state of the Philippine Independent Church (PIC) or Aglipayan Church on the eve of its 100 years anniversary—it is a church which can be dubbed as a "born loser."

It was established with a bang but ended with a whimper. The tragic Supreme Court decision of 1906 (later affirmed by the US Supreme Court in 1909) which ordered the return of all properties sequestered by the PIC back to the Roman Catholic Church dealt a fatal blow to this fledging church from which it was not able to recover. The saying that "everybody loves a winner but not a loser" also applied to the PIC which resulted in the massive exodus of its adherents back to the Catholic fold.

For the past 99 years it has been hounded by hopeless division. In 1946, the church was split into two groups namely the Fonancier and Bayaca factions due to leadership issues. History has repeated itself when the PIC suffered another schism in the '70s (this time between Supreme Bishops Macario v. Ga and Abdias de la Cruz) due to the validity of the implementation of the church's 1977 Constitution.

Since time immemorial, most of its bishops and priests have placed personal interest over and above the interest of the church. As a result the Aglipayan Church was not able to produce an outstanding periodical nor establish a prestigious school or university. It has no printing press, orphanages, nor state-of-the-art medical center to speak of since its inception.

In this age of modern technology, it has failed to come up with a radio or television program geared at strengthening the faith of its members. It has failed to emphasize the significant role played by the Aglipayan Church in the country's struggle for freedom to non-Aglipayans.

It is not surprising that the PIC faithful has not grown beyond its initial membership of 1.5 million since 1902. Potential members were lost to other religions due to the proselytizing done by other sects to Aglipayans who are ignorant of their rich historical heritage.

Every generation, thousands of Aglipayans are lost to other sects due to inter-faith marriages, through the Catholic schools where Aglipayan parents enroll their children in their quest for quality education, and lately, due to the rise of born again Christianity.

The departure of the hated friars and the rise of Filipino Roman Catholic bishops and priests greatly weakened the appeal of the Aglipayan Church to the Filipinos in general. At this point in time, it is very difficult to sell or market a religion that advocates the Filipinization of the clergy when the Philippine Catholic hierarchy has already produced five cardinals to date. The clergy training and financial assistance extended by the Anglican and Philippine Episcopal Church to the PIC was also not effective in stemming the setbacks encountered by the Aglipayan church since its birth.

In this new millennium, the PIC's lack of purpose for its existence is like a mortal wound that has greatly affected its future.

As we march into the 21st century, hatred against the friars and nationalism which was espoused by the PIC cannot replace the genuine faith offered as an alternative by the Roman Catholic Church.

—ALFREDO S. VELASCO JR.,
24-B Alfonso St.,
Pandacan, Manila

In Cardinal Groer's defense

REV. Dr. Neil Parado in his letter "Real culprit behind clerical sexual abuses" is wrong in placing Cardinal Hans Groer next to Pope Alexander VI, and calling him a "shining example of the utter failure of mandatory celibacy." Groer's accuser, who himself has been called a child-abuser by his fellow teachers, gave his derogatory news to a paper, after having been denied an employment at the archdiocesan Curia of Vienna (Wien), the Curia of Cardinal Groer. As far as I know, he never repeated the accusation later on. Many Austrian Catholics took it for granted that he got a substantial reward for this calumny. Cardinal Groer did not defend himself. He just went to the holy father to voice his side to him. For sure, the Vicar of Christ gave him the embrace of peace. Since his good name had been destroyed, Groer resigned from his high office and took over a humble chaplaincy at a community of sisters.

In short, the ugly sin, said to have been committed 30 (or more?) years before, is nothing but hearsay, and possibly a lie. But granted that it could have been a fact, who has the right to conclude that the poor delinquent did not make up by a good confession and did not do penance for it, for the rest of his life. How many married people, after having been unfaithful once or a few times, have repented and reconciled, and become better and happier partners than they had been before their humbling mistake. Did anyone ever conclude, that for the sake of the committed infidelities of married people (and how many of them happen, especially at these times) the mandatory marriage law has proven its utter failure? For me, the conclusion of Rev. Dr. Neil Parado is utterly unacceptable.

The real culprit for the sexual abuses of priests and bishops at this time is not mandatory celibacy but the progressive apostasy which—according to messages of none less than Jesus—has first prevailed among clerics and from them spread to the laity. But who is the promoter of this apostasy? The one who has succeeded to explain away his very existence, Satan. Let it be enough to say, that Jesus promises a true reversal of this apocalyptic catastrophe, through unimaginable but biblically announced sufferings, that will bring about conversions by the millions and millions. Jesus will then come and restore His Church and the priesthood He gave her almost 2000 years ago. His converted and "new priests" will no more protest against mandatory celibacy. They will commit themselves totally to the "Fiat" of His Kingdom of Peace and Grace and Holiness.

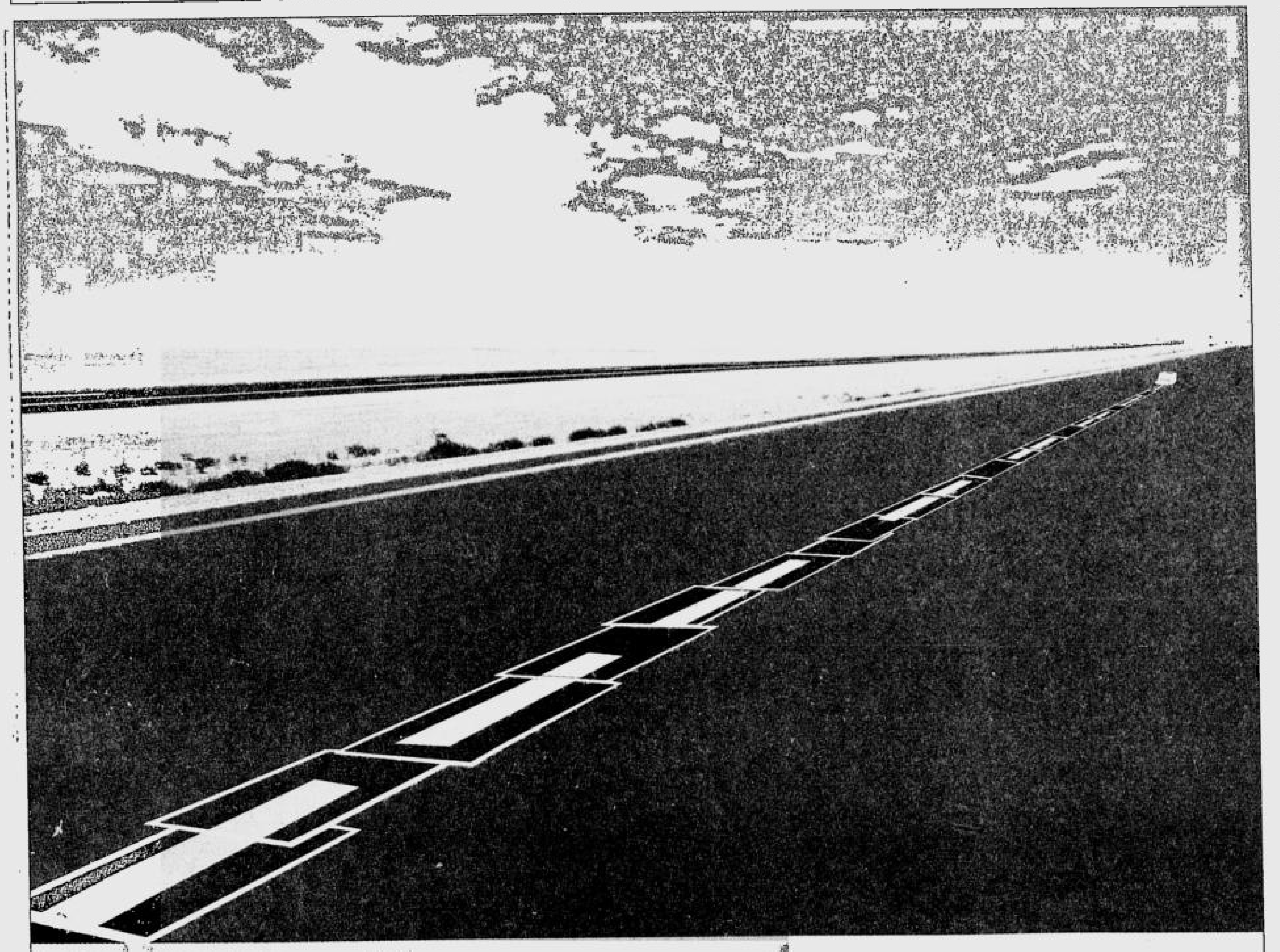
—FR. DR. JOSEPH TASCHNER, SVD,
Mary Consolatrix Monastery, Naguilian,
La Union

Error in GMA's 2002 calendar

I WOULD like to call the attention of the Heraldry Office of Malacañang that there is an error in the Presidential Seal in the 2002 calendar of President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo.

The Presidential Seal contains 84 stars which is wrong because our country has only 79 provinces, the stars in the President Seal represent the number of provinces in our country.

—PAUL R. MORTEL, MBLA Court,
Malanday, Marikina City



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Per DTI - NCR Permit No. 0597, Series of 2002.

The WORLD

Editor **Luverne B. Gueco**

Sharon: Palestinian state still on agenda

JERUSALEM—Prime Minister Ariel Sharon and US leaders signaled that a Palestinian state was still on a Middle East peacemaking agenda, despite a vote by Sharon's Likud party never to accept one.

While Sharon wrestled with a party leadership challenge and Washington sought his assurances over the Likud decision, Yasser Arafat toured West Bank cities for the first time in five months and told Palestinians they would win a state.

But the Palestinian president skipped a visit to the devastated Jenin refugee camp, threatened with a hostile reception by Palestinians who say they owe their loyalty to Islamic militants and demand reforms.

"To Jerusalem we are headed. Jerusalem is the capital of our independent state of Palestine, never mind who agrees or does not," Arafat told a crowd in Nablus in the northern West Bank.

The White House said on Monday that US President George W. Bush would keep pushing for the creation of a Palestinian state. Secretary of State Colin Powell spoke by telephone with Sharon about the issue en route to a Nato meeting in Iceland.

"The prime minister and I discussed the decision made by the Likud (central) committee yesterday (Sunday) and of course he reaffirmed to me that he remains committed to moving forward to achieve that vision that I think most people have of a Palestinian state," Powell said.

Sharon has spoken of the creation of a Palestinian state at the end of a long peacemaking process. He has since said it is premature to talk of a state and has called for major reform of Arafat's Palestinian Authority as a precondition for talks.

Echoing comments he made before stalking off the stage at is party convention after the vote, Sharon told Likud legislators on Monday that he, not the party, would set peacemaking policy.

"Two-thirds of the public elected me to make decisions, and I have," Sharon said. "I will not allow internal political considerations or self-serving tricks to determine policy."

The Likud vote marked a victory for former Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu over the incumbent Sharon in a looming battle for the party leadership. *Reuters*

PALESTINIAN school children rest in front of militant groups' graffiti May 13 in the Gaza Strip refugee camp of Rafah. AFP

US, Russia agree to cut number of nuclear warheads

WASHINGTON—US President George W. Bush said on Monday he would sign a treaty with Russia to remove two-thirds of long-range nuclear warheads from missiles, bombers and submarines and "liquidate the legacy of the Cold War."

Russian President Vladimir Putin welcomed the deal, to be signed next week in Moscow. It gives Moscow a binding treaty politically important to Putin, and gives Washington flexibility to hold weapons in storage rather than dismantle them and withdraw from the pact on short notice.

"What you have here is a deal in which Russia got a treaty and we got everything else," said Brookings Institution arms control analyst Ivo Daalder. The treaty must be ratified by the US Senate and Russian parliament.

Bush announced the deal in a surprise statement at the White House and said he would sign the treaty at a Moscow summit with Putin, set for May 24.

"This treaty will liquidate the legacy of the Cold War," Bush said. "It will make the world more peaceful and put behind us the Cold War once and for all."

The two sides are separately addressing US aims to deploy a missile defense system, as part of an outline on a new strategic relationship being prepared for the Moscow summit. *Reuters*

Chavez says he was warned of coup bid

LONDON—Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez said on Monday he had advance warning of the military coup that briefly overthrew him in April and was able secretly to organize loyal military units that put him back in power.

The left-wing leader of the world's fifth biggest oil producer told BBC Television's Newsnight program he had a phone call from Opec Secretary General Ali Rodriguez—a Venezuelan—warning the United States was fomenting a coup.

"It was a call of alert. That helped me," Chavez, speaking in Spanish, told Newsnight.

He said he had evidence that US military officers visited coup headquarters during the coup and had radar images of a helicopter taking off and flying inland from a foreign naval vessel that illegally entered Venezuelan waters on April 13.

"I have for example the proof, the written proof. I have the time of entries and exits of the two military officers from the United States into the headquarters of the coup plotters," he said.

"I have their names, who they met with, what they said. Proof on video and on still photographs," he added. *Reuters*

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PER DTI-NCR Permit #0771, Series of 2002

Powell retreats on Cuba allegation

GANDER, Newfoundland—US Secretary of State Colin Powell on Monday appeared to back off an allegation by a senior US official a week ago that Cuba was working to develop biological weapons.

Powell, speaking to reporters on his way to a Nato foreign ministers' meeting in Iceland, said the United States was concerned the communist-run state "has the capacity and capability to conduct such research."

Bolton

That appeared to be a milder accusation against Cuba than that made by Undersecretary of State John Bolton last Monday, when he said in a speech in Washington: Here is what we now know: The United States believes that Cuba has at least a limited offensive biological warfare research and development effort."

Bolton accused Havana of sharing the technology with other states.

Powell said: "As Undersecretary Bolton said recently, we do believe Cuba has a biological offensive research capability. We didn't say it actually had some weapons but it has the capacity and capability to conduct such research," he said.

"Undersecretary Bolton's speech . . . was not breaking new ground," he said.

The issue has been raised during a visit to Cuba by former US President Jimmy Carter, who toured the Center for Genetic Engineering and Biotechnology on Monday.

Carter suggested Washington's allegations were designed to cast a shadow over his landmark goodwill visit and said US officials told him before his visit there was no evidence linking Cuba to the export of biological weaponry.

Vaccines

Cuba says the facility is dedicated to making medicine and vaccines sold to many nations and denies it had any program to make biological weapons.

Cuban President Fidel Castro on Friday rejected the US charge as a lie intended to counter growing support in the United States for establishing normal relations with Cuba.

US officials declined repeatedly to show any evidence to back up Bolton's statement, saying that was out of a concern not to reveal their sources.

Cuba analysts in Washington were skeptical of the accusations, with some suggesting they reflected the position of a group of hard-line anti-Castro officials with a strong influence in the Bush administration.*Reuters*

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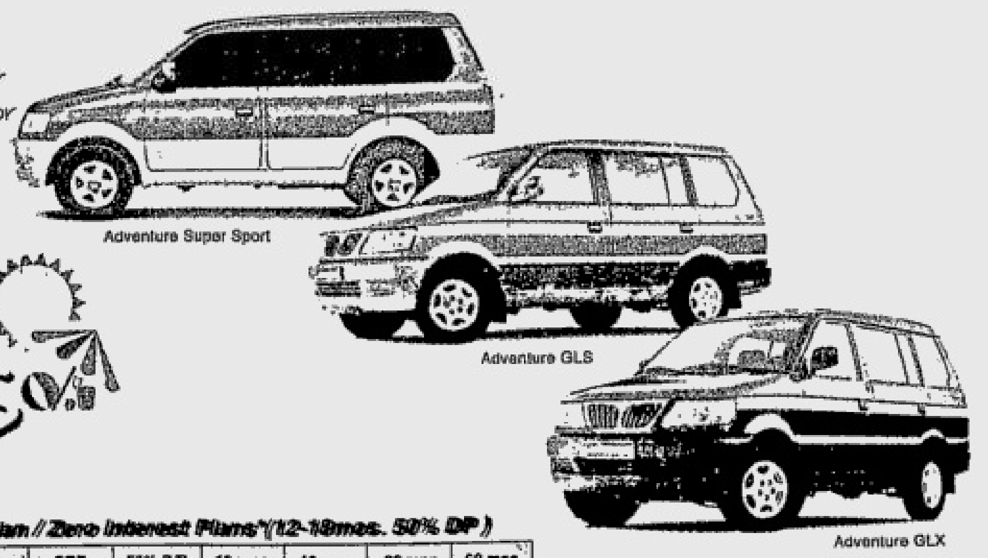
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GLS Gas M/T	705,000	100,000	28,301	20,190
Gas A/T	740,000	100,000	29,706	21,192
GLS Diesel M/T	720,000	100,000	28,903	20,620
Super Sport Diesel M/T	770,000	114,000	30,911	22,051
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Gas A/T	790,000	123,000	31,713	22,624

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Diesel M/T	670,000	335,000	*27,917	19,299	10,960	7,745
GLS Gas M/T	705,000	352,500	*29,375	*19,583	11,207	7,918
Gas A/T	740,000	370,000	*30,833	*20,556	11,593	8,189
GLS Diesel M/T	720,000	360,000	*30,000	*20,000	11,373	8,034
Super Sport Diesel M/T	770,000	385,000	*32,083	*21,389	12,405	8,766
Super Sport Gas M/T	750,000	375,000	*31,250	21,516	12,219	8,635
Gas A/T	790,000	395,000	*32,917	22,779	12,935	9,142

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Japan vet kills self after mad cow test

TOKYO—A Japanese veterinarian who failed to diagnose mad cow disease in a sick dairy cow has apparently committed suicide, health officials said on Tuesday, a day after Japan confirmed its fourth case of the illness in cattle.

The news came as the Health Ministry moved to step up mad cow testing to try to ease concerns over the latest outbreak, which has reignited a health scare that devastated Japan's food sector last year.

The 29-year-old veterinarian, an employee of a public health center near the site of the latest outbreak on Japan's northern island of Hokkaido, was found dead at her home on Monday, officials at the center said.

Police are investigating, media reports said.

The veterinarian had left a note apologizing for failing to detect the disease in the six-year-old Holstein cow after it was brought into the center for examination, the officials said.

So sorry

"I'm so sorry for my unforgivable fault as a veterinarian," Mitsuaki Kawakami, head of Kushiro Public Health Center, quoted the note as saying.

Japan's latest case of mad cow disease, formally known as bovine spongiform encephalopathy (BSE), comes just in time to tarnish its image weeks before thousands of visitors arrive for soccer's World Cup finals, being cohosted with South Korea.

South Korea is grappling with a health scare of its own, slaughtering tens of thousands of animals to contain an outbreak of foot-and-mouth disease, which can kill cloven-hoofed livestock such as pigs and cows but is harmless to humans.

The same cannot be said of BSE, which has been linked to variant Creutzfeldt-Jakob disease, which has killed about 100 people in Europe but none in Japan.

Domestic media said the veterinarian had misdiagnosed the cow as suffering from neuroparalysis in one of its legs.

Difficulty standing is one symptom of BSE.

Only after it was slaughtered for processing into beef did tests come up positive for the disease.

'No mistakes'

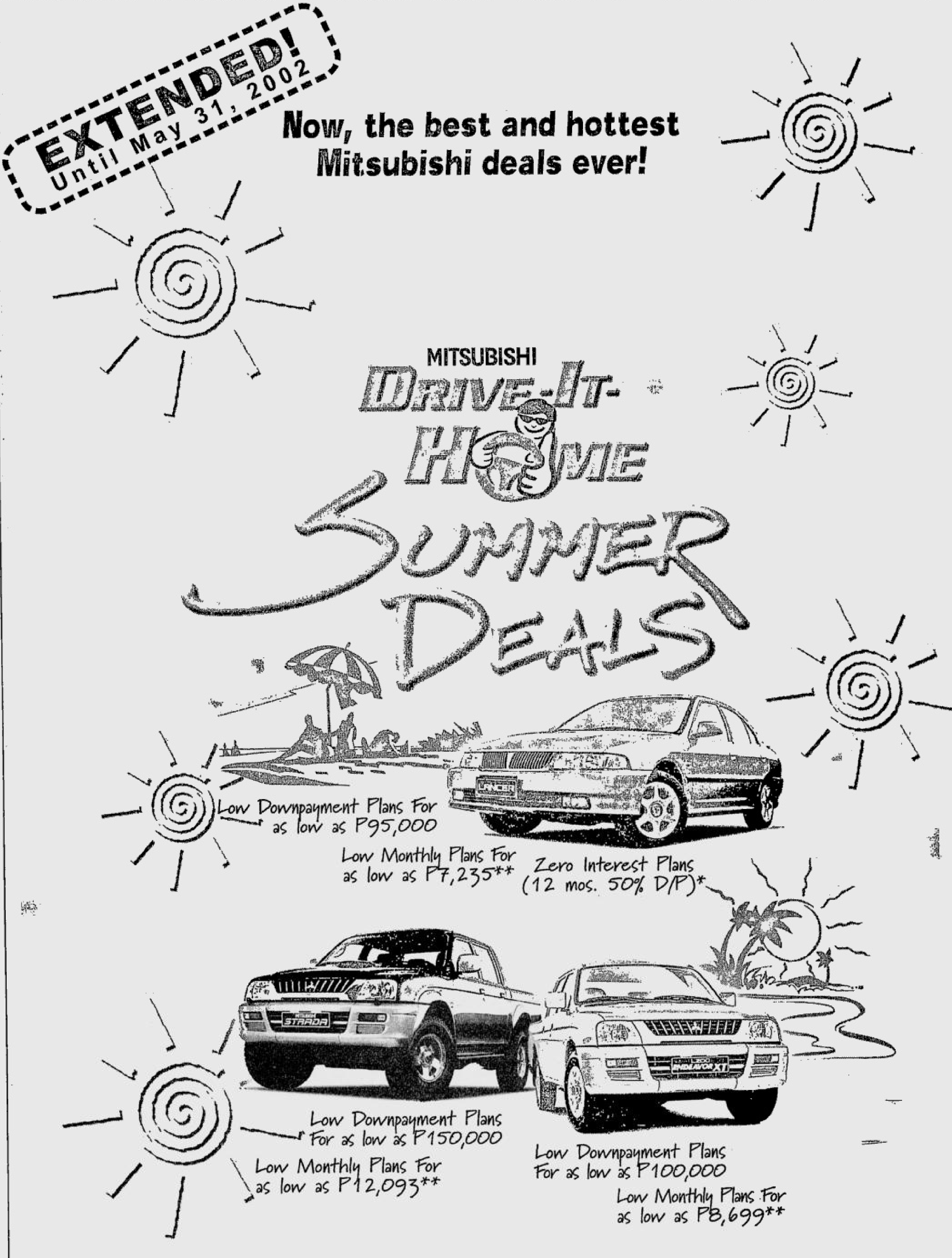
Experts called the veterinarian's death a tragic reminder of the difficulty of diagnosing BSE in living animals.

"There were no mistakes in her work," Kawakami said.

"I don't think anyone can confirm BSE in a living animal with the current level of Japanese testing.

"It's extremely regrettable . . . She was earnest in her job. She was a person with a strong sense of responsibility."

The first outbreak of BSE last September hammered Japanese beef consumption and dealt a heavy blow to earnings of restaurants and meat companies. *Reuters*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GLS A/T	710,000	132,000	28,502	20,333
MX	790,000	**150,000**	31,713	22,624
Strada				
Std Model	994,000	**150,000**	39,903	28,466
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Std Model	715,000	**100,000**	28,703	20,476
Special Edition	725,000	125,000	29,104	20,763

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GLS M/T	680,000	340,000	30,365	11,875	8,398
GLS A/T	710,000	355,000	31,705	12,399	8,768
MX	790,000	395,000	35,277	13,796	9,756
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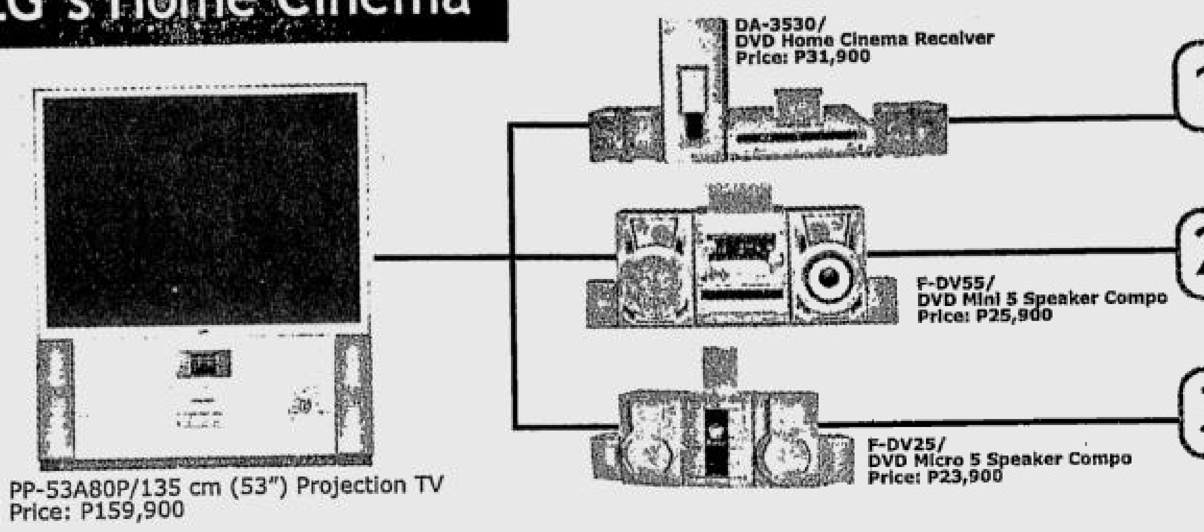
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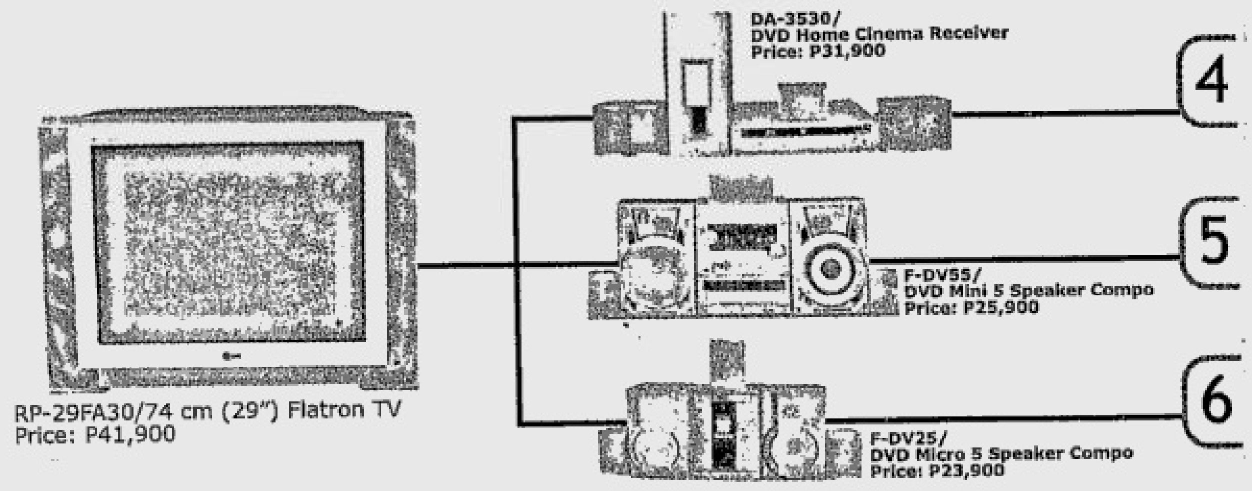
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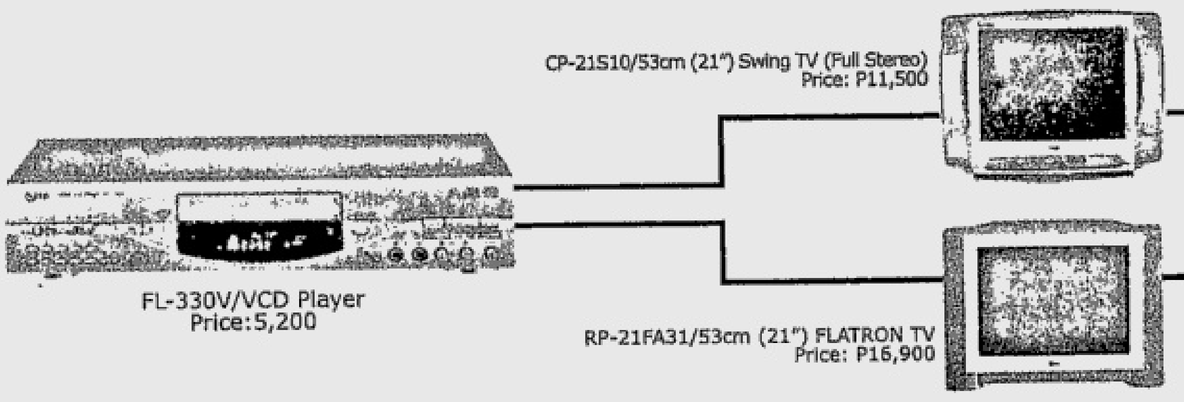
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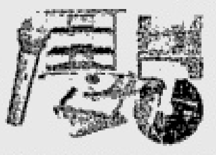
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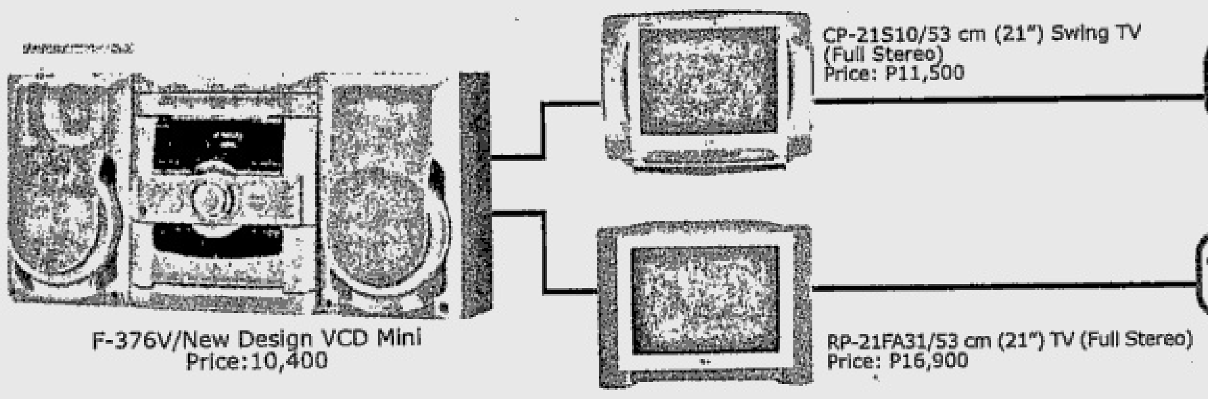
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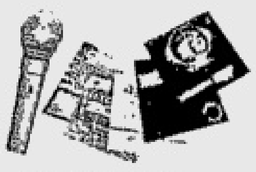
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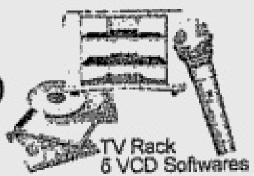
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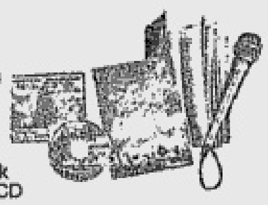
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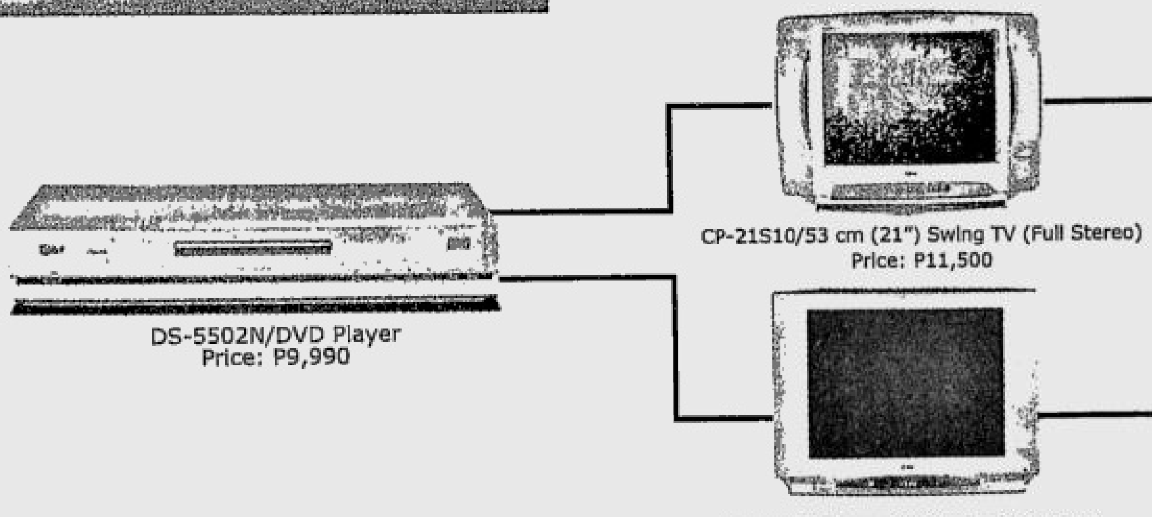
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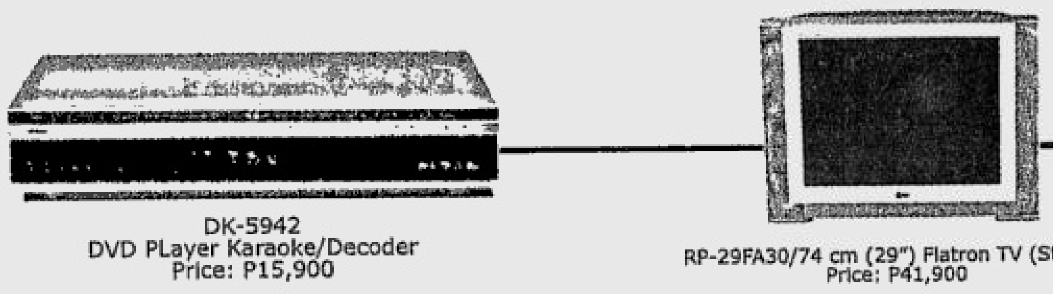
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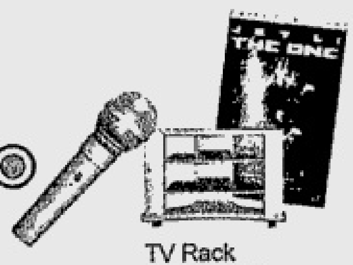
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'Most active' NPA front in Bohol tagged

TAGBILARAN CITY—Military authorities have identified the hotbed of communist insurgency in the province following a clash last week that led to the capture of eight suspected rebels, including three minors.

Col. Dionisio Torina of the Philippine Army's 302nd Infantry Brigade confirmed that the New People's Army's Front 1, which covers 10 towns, was the most active of the five guerrilla fronts based in Bohol.

A report to Brig. Gen. Reynaldo Alcasid of the 3rd Infantry Division and Maj. Gen. Jacinto Ligot of the Central Command, said those captured were members of Squad 1 of the NPA's Front 1.

On May 8, members of the 17th Special Forces and the local police engaged an NPA group in a 20-minute gun battle in Barangay Candasig, Balilihan.

Wounded and brought to the Gov. Celestino Gallares Memorial Hospital were suspected rebels Francis Jude Alegarbes, 28; Armando Payot, 23; Proculo Tandog Jr., 25; and Alfredo Yodico, 21. Yodico is allegedly the assistant team leader of the squad.

Also wounded was a girl aged 17, a boy aged 16, and Cecilia Tambis, 70. The rebels had reportedly taken refuge in Tambis' house.

Detained in Camp Dagohoy were another male aged 17 and Federico Bugas, 23.

An Army document presented at a recent meeting of the Provincial Peace and Order Council showed that Front 1 is the most active NPA front in Bohol.

It said Front 1, reportedly headed by National Democratic Front Central Visayas spokesperson Sivino Clamucha, exerts influence in 37 barangays and infiltrated 29 more.

Militant groups were preparing charges against the composite team involved in the raid. ***Chito A. Fuentes, PDI Visayas Bureau***

MANDY NAVASERO

MONEY FROM SALT
Berlina Colorado, 52, has been gathering rock salt in Dasol, Pangasinan, for 25 years. She sells the salt to "bagoong" and dried fish makers from Lingayen and other towns at P100-P150 per sack.

Court convicts 2 Chinese men in shabu bust

BAGUIO CITY—A judge here on Monday sentenced two Chinese men to up to 40 years in prison after they were found guilty of possession of more than 10 kilograms of shabu worth P21 million.

The case of Chung Shiao Tseng and Leung Kuan was among those cited by Mary "Rosebud" Ong, a former police undercover agent, in the narco-politics investigation in the Senate last year.

In a 13-page decision, Judge Ruben Ayson of the regional trial court here also ordered Chung and Leung to pay a fine of P1 million each.

Members of the defunct Presidential Anti-Organized Crime Task Force arrested the two on Jan. 11, 2000 for kidnapping three other Chinese men. They were arrested in a two-story house at John Bee Village here.

During the raid, Chung was caught guarding Sin Ho, Liu Yao Wu and Jia Xuan Zheng, who were handcuffed. Leung was arrested while trying to escape, court records showed.

The following day, members of the police's Criminal Investigation and Detection Group searched the house and found 10.397 kg of shabu.

Ong, during the Senate inquiry last year, claimed that the kidnapping was staged by the PAOCTF.

"The two (Chung and Leung) were crying and could not believe the decision," said the court-appointed interpreter, lawyer Jeannie Lim.

"They insisted they were in Manila, where they were tortured, when the raid was conducted. They said they did not know anything about the shabu."

During the trial, Leung said he was arrested on his way to John Bee Village to get some spices. He said he was taken to the PAOCTF office in Quezon City where he was allegedly interrogated and maltreated, and his little finger cut.

Chung told the court that he went to the house in John Bee to fetch his employer's husband. He said it was a coincidence that he was there when the police came.

The court, however, did not believe the accused.

"The court cannot give credence to the version of the accused for (this) was obviously concocted in their miserable attempt to exculpate themselves from the charges," Ayson said.

Ayson also declared the validity of the search warrant, which was questioned by lawyer Frisco Domalsin, the defense counsel. ***Delmar Cariño and Jovelyn Reyes, PDI Northern Luzon Bureau***

12 suspects in killing of Robin's half-brother charged

CABANATUAN CITY—Twelve people have been charged before the provincial prosecutor's office here with the abduction and killing of Rodolfo "Gino" Padilla, half brother of actor Robin Padilla, last March.

They were also charged with the killing of Padilla's farm caretaker, Simeon de Gracia.

Some of those charged are relatives of Padilla, according to Supt. Raul Bacalzo, Nueva Ecija police director.

Padilla, 27, was reportedly killed due to a land dispute involving his relatives.

Charged were Crispin, Wilson and Gil, all surnamed Cariño; Allan Gamboa, Ruben Jose, Reynaldo Enriquez, Felimon Roque, Junior Aquino, Juan Dagdag and Eli Ramos. Two suspects remained unidentified.

Assistant Prosecutor Mario Veloso is handling the evaluation of the cases against the suspects. A source in Veloso's office said the suspects would be notified and would be given at least 10 days to answer the charges.

Relatives of Padilla allegedly hired those who abducted and killed him, Bacalzo said.

On March 8, at least five armed men took Padilla from his farm at Barangay Bibiclat in Cuyapo town. Before leaving, they shot and killed De Gracia who tried to save Padilla.

The gunmen burned Padilla's farmhouse, his Mitsubishi car and a tractor before they left.

Padilla's body was found in a ravine in Pantabangan town a week later. His hands were tied and his body bore several bullet wounds.

Bacalzo said the suspects were identified after a witness, who knew about the plan to abduct and kill Padilla, went to the police and offered a statement.

The witness told police that the murder was carried out by the hired killers for P400,000.

Bacalzo earlier said investigators knew the identities of some of those who planned Padilla's abduction and murder since April.

But he said they did not immediately file charges because they were still securing the commitment of their witnesses to cooperate in the case. ***Anselmo Roque, PDI Central Luzon Desk***

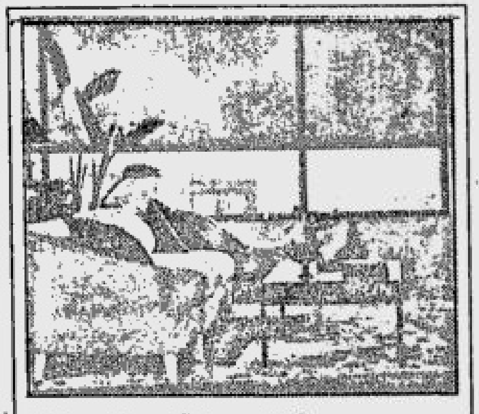
Taal mayor survives gun attack

TAAL, Batangas—Had Mayor Librado Cabrera's security guard not made himself a human shield, this town would have lost its top public official.

Cabrera, 54, was shot by a political rival on Sunday dawn while a cockfighting match was going on at the Riverside Cockpit Arena in Barangay 4, this town.

The mayor, a cockfighting aficionado, was hit in the left side of his lower back. His security aide, German Pesigan, 56, of Mahabang Ludlot and member of the town's Civil Security Unit, suffered multiple bullet wounds.

Senior Supt. Rolando Lorenzo, provincial police director, identified the alleged attacker as Felipe Villamin, 54, a special agent of the Bureau of Customs police, of Marella Street in the town proper. ***Mei Magsino, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau***



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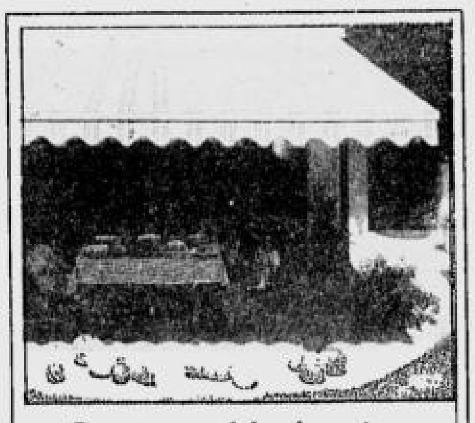

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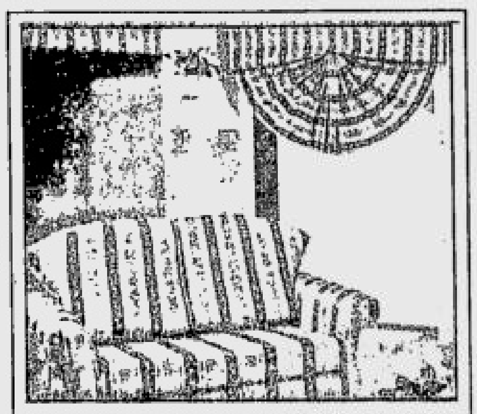

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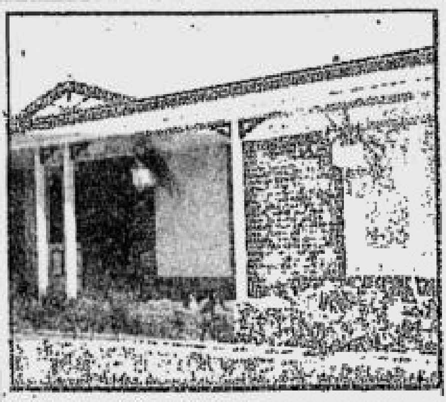

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Pantabangan Dam water level critical

By Anselmo Roque
PDI Central Luzon Desk

CABANATUAN CITY—Irrigation officials have stopped releasing irrigation water for rice fields in several towns in Nueva Ecija to prevent destruction of the Pantabangan Dam tunnels and to save more water for the next planting season.

Proceso Domingo, Upper Pampanga River Integrated Irrigation System (UPRIIS) operations manager, said the water level at the dam on Monday was 171.5 meters.

He said his agency had decided to stop releasing water although National Irrigation Administrator Jesus Emmanuel Paras had approved the release of at least 1.5 meters of water from the dam to irrigate 700 hectares of rice land.

The dam cannot release water when its level reaches 170 meters. If irrigation water is continuously released, the dam's tunnels might be destroyed because of the swift flow of current, Domingo said.

Carlito Gapasin, UPRIIS institutional development division chief, said the inflow of water to the dam's reservoir was minimal because of the long dry spell that began in October last year.

The dam needs to impound water in its reservoir for the next cropping season in June, he said.

The weather situation today is similar to 1998 when the dam's level dropped to 169 meters, he said.

But the water level at the dam this year has a chance to increase because of the operation of the Casecnan multipurpose irrigation and power project, which siphons water through a tunnel from rivers in Nueva Vizcaya to the Pantabangan Dam reservoir, he added.

Reports, however, said the water level in Nueva Vizcaya's rivers was low, explaining the little inflow of water from that part to the dam.

Gapasin said water from Nueva Vizcaya was flowing to the dam at a rate of three cubic meters per second. The inflow should be at least 10 to 15 meters per second to increase the water level at the dam, he said.

Gapasin said rice crops in more than 74,000 hectares of land serviced by the UPRIIS have already been harvested.

Many farmers, however, are worried that their wet season cropping may be delayed because of the drought and the low water level of Pantabangan.

Davao education exec linked to scam sacked

MATI, Davao Oriental—Education Secretary Raul Roco has relieved a ranking education official here for alleged involvement in the rampant selling of teaching positions.

Juan Taloma, schools division superintendent, admitted that he was relieved because of charges he was involved in the scandal.

"I was sacked because of false and baseless allegations that I am behind the 'teaching jobs for sale' syndicate inside the (Department of Education) office here," Taloma told newsmen.

Some teacher-applicants have written Roco after a story on the massive selling of teaching positions here was published in the INQUIRER in January. They claimed that they, too, were made to pay in exchange for the posts.

Some of them said that despite having paid the P30,000 demanded by unscrupulous education officials, "the promised teaching jobs have remained a promise up to now."

In the same letter dated Jan. 30, the applicants linked Taloma to the scam.

Shortly after the story about the scandal broke out, Taloma said he would immediately launch an investigation.

"We would like to inform you that we don't believe that any action regarding our complaints would be taken by schools division superintendent Juan Taloma because he himself is part of the syndicate," the teacher-applicants told Roco.

Taloma said he was surprised at Roco's action because the order for his relief came when the DepEd Southern Mindanao office had just cleared him of the charges.

He surmised that several politicians were behind his removal. ***Ferdinand O. Zuasola, PDI Mindanao Bureau***

BING GONZALES/PDI MINDANAO BUREAU

NO TO TUITION HIKE
Members of the National Union of Students in the Philippines stage a picket in front of the regional office of the Commission on Higher Education in Davao City to protest tuition increases imposed by schools.

WEATHER FORECAST

FORECAST: Visayas and Mindanao including Palawan will experience mostly cloudy skies with scattered rainshowers and thunderstorms. The rest of Luzon will have partly cloudy to at times cloudy skies.

SOURCE: PAGASA

Metro Manila	Partly Cloudy	HI36° Lo 24°
Baguio	Partly Cloudy	HI 26° Lo 17°
Tuguegarao	Partly Cloudy	HI 40° Lo 24°
Laoag	Partly Cloudy	HI 35° Lo 27°
Clark Zone	Partly Cloudy	HI 36° Lo 24°
Tagaytay	Partly Cloudy	HI 34° Lo 22°
Legazpi	Partly Cloudy	HI 32° Lo 25°
Calapan	Partly Cloudy	HI 34° Lo 25°
Iloilo/Bacolod	Cloudy with Rains	HI 34° Lo 25°
Roxas	Cloudy with Rains	HI 33° Lo 26°
Cebu	Cloudy with Rains	HI 33° Lo 26°
Tacloban	Cloudy with Rains	HI 34° Lo 26°
Gen. Santos	Cloudy with Rains	HI 30° Lo 24°
Zamboanga	Cloudy with Rains	HI 33° Lo 24°
Cagayan de Oro	Cloudy with Rains	HI 32° Lo 23°
Davao	Cloudy with Rains	HI 32° Lo 23°

Compiled by: Ray Leyesa, PDI Research/05/15/02

ROUNDUP

Water summit proposed

BAGUIO CITY—A city official has proposed to convene a water summit here to find solutions to Baguio's water crisis. Councilor Richard Cariño, chair of the city council's committee on health, sanitation, ecology and environmental protection, said the summit would gather officials of the Baguio Water District, operators of commercial water delivery firms, water retailers and other agencies to discuss ways to improve the city's water supply. ***Catherine de la Chica and Audrey Velasco, PDI Northern Luzon Bureau***

P20M for drainage

BAGUIO CITY—Sen. Juan Flavier has promised to allocate P20 million to hasten the completion of a drainage project in downtown Baguio. With the additional funding, Nestor Nicolas, Department of Public Works and Highways district engineer, said the drainage project is expected to be completed on June 8, a month ahead of its target. The project was undertaken to prevent a repeat of the massive flooding downtown during the onslaught of Typhoon "Feria" in July last year. The construction of the drainage has been causing monstrous traffic jams here since last month. ***Catherine de la Chica and Audrey Velasco, PDI Northern Luzon Bureau***

Village exec killed

CABANATUAN CITY—A village official in Barangay Boracus in Cuyapo, Nueva Ecija, was shot and killed by suspected communist rebels in his house on Thursday night, police said. Reports identified the victim as Jesus Labrado, chair of Barangay Boracus. Police said suspected members of the New People's Army gunned down Labrado shortly after he offered them snacks and accompanied them on their way out of his house. The assailants fled aboard Labrado's tricycle.

Anselmo Roque, PDI Central Luzon Desk

P146M for Mindoro

CALAPAN CITY—The Department of Agrarian Reform has launched a total of P146-million worth of infrastructure projects for the towns of Gloria, Baco, San Teodoro and Socorro, according to Oriental Mindoro agrarian reform officer Miriam C. Santos. Santos said P56 million would go to Gloria while P30 million each would be released to Baco, San Teodoro and Socorro. The projects consist of farm-to-market roads, irrigation facilities and water supply system.

PDI Southern Luzon Bureau

Pilots' coop grows

DAVAO CITY—Twenty years after it started in 1982, the assets of the ACDI Credit Cooperative of the Philippine Army Air Corps and the Aviation Cadet Alumni Association grew to about P1 billion from an original capital of P200,000. Because of its sound fiscal position, the ACDI is now one of the top five credit cooperatives in the Armed Forces of the Philippines. On May 10, 1982, it started with a membership of 26 officer-pilots and has since established 20 branches across the country, employing more than 150 people.

PDI Mindanao Bureau

DoT's peace caravan

CAGAYAN DE ORO CITY—The Department of Tourism in Northern and Southern Mindanao and Caraga will launch the Eastern Mindanao "Caravan for Peace" on May 29 to lure tourists from Luzon and the Visayas to visit the island. The caravan, which will run until June 2, will pass through the cities of Surigao, Butuan, Cagayan de Oro, Malaybalay and Davao, and back to Surigao. Dorothy Jean Pabayo, Eastern Mindanao director, said the event would mark the first leg of regional tours in Mindanao.

Grace Cantal-Albasin, PDI Mindanao Bureau

700 new cops

CALAMBA CITY—The Philippine National Police in Southern Tagalog is hiring 700 young men from the region's 10 provinces to ease manpower shortage and enhance peace and order in the region. Chief Supt. Domingo A. Reyes Jr., PNP regional director, said those interested must register with their nearest police station or provincial police offices.

PDI Southern Luzon Bureau

Relief assistance

CALAPAN CITY—The National Disaster Coordinating Council has released P5 million for calamity relief assistance and rehabilitation of roads and construction of canals in Oriental Mindoro. Sen. Noli de Castro has also approved P2 million for the purchase of medicines and medical equipment, according to the provincial health board. The province is also expected to receive P1.5 million financial assistance from the Philippine Charity Sweepstakes Office. British Columbia donated P1.5 million in medical assistance, consisting of 40 beds, 40 mattresses, an anesthesia machine and assorted medical supplies for distribution to the needy.

Donna Virola, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau

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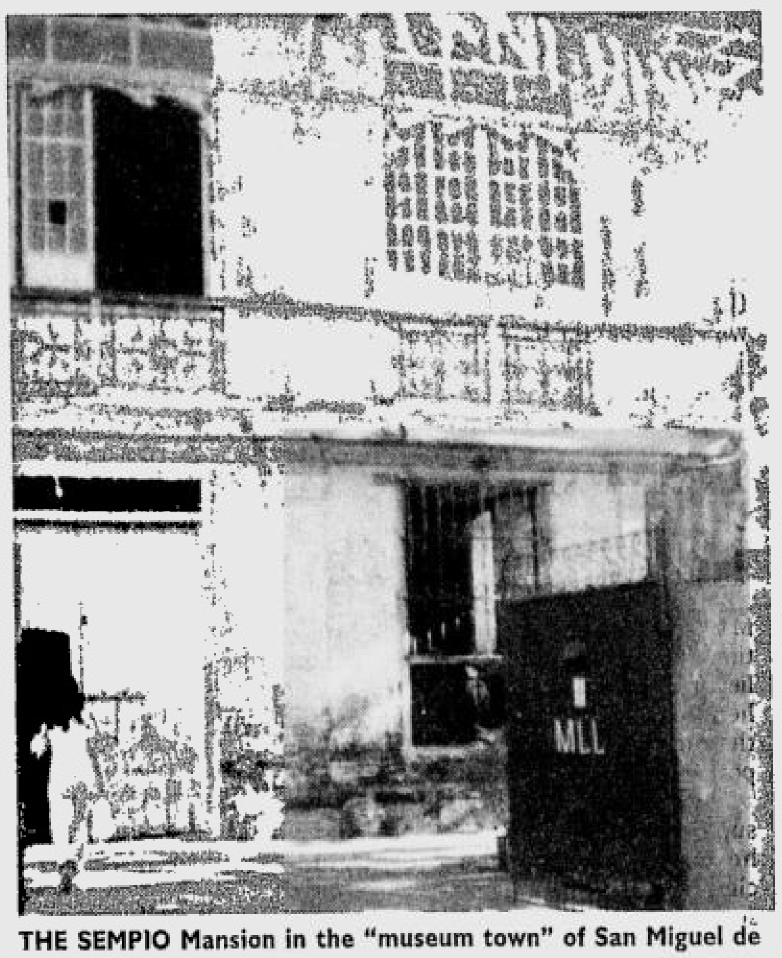
INQUIRER Northern Luzon
Editor Jun Bandayrel ◎ Bureau Chief Rolando B. Fernandez

San Miguel de Mayumo: History, sweets and more



THE SEMPIO Mansion in the "museum town" of San Miguel de Mayumo in Bulacan. TONETTE OREJAS

By Tonette Orejas
San Miguel, Bulacan

THE ARTISTS: Raul Sunico and Priscilla de la Fuente-Sison. The compositions: Straight from Nicanor Abelardo and Francisco Buencamino.

The event, a piano concerto, is already a remarkable assembly of two living renowned performing artists and two musical maestros who, although long gone, live through their immortal songs.

All four have roots in San Miguel de Mayumo, Bulacan.

"Our very own," beams Jesus de la Fuente, president of the San Miguel de Mayumo Foundation, referring to the artists.

Sunico and Sison are performing "for the love of the town," De la Fuente says. And for a very nominal fee, he continues, so the foundation could raise P500,000 for the repair and renovation of the San Miguel Arkangel Church, the venue of the June 8 concert.

The show of such talents and the first event to grace the 133-year-old Baroque church is just one of recent efforts of the foundation to, in the words of De la Fuente, "preserve and promote our cultural, historical heritage."

There's more about San Miguel—the only town with the appendage "de Mayumo" or from the word sweet derived from its original province, Pampanga—than *pastillas de leche, turrones de casuy* and *bodin*.

San Miguel is the second biggest town in Bulacan, having 49 villages, many of which have remained agricultural.

FDV Buencamino, formerly of the Manila Times and a local historian, sees more sources of pride for the present and future generations.

At 83, Buencamino has seen and heard much, straight from his elders. His own home is a veritable museum where guests are welcome.

San Miguel's Biak na Bato on the Sierra Madre range was the capital of the First Philippine Republic in 1897. In the mountain fortress, 52 revolutionary leaders approved the Biak-na-Bato Constitution. The Pact of Biak na Bato—which secured a truce between Filipino patriots and Spain (or some said the surrender of Gen. Emilio Aguinaldo and his exile to Hong Kong)—was also signed in that stronghold.

The Madlum Cave is a spiritual refuge, a summer getaway and a former fort of Japanese soldiers and the Hukbo ng Bayan Laban sa Hapon from nearby Pampanga and Nueva Ecija.

At Madlum's stalactite-rich caves, old folks said the small, miraculous image of St. Michael, the Prince of Angels, was found early in the Spanish era.

The town's Sibul Springs was a prestigious vacation area even before Baguio City drew all the crowds. Here, Presidents Manuel Quezon, Sergio Osmeña and Manuel Roxas relaxed. Many visitors still come for the medicinal water gushing from volcanic springs.

But the Biak na Bato National Park is a disgust. Only a few trees are left in the park and residents say because officials and foresters of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources leave as fast as they come after "*kodakan*" (photo sessions during reforestation activities).

But such town of industrious people is also a milieu of creative souls that nurtured some of the talents that define the Filipino in us.

Aside from Abelardo, Buencamino, Sunico and Sison, the foundation says among San Miguel natives are first Filipino baritone Jose Mossesgeld-Santiago, painters Mauro Malang Santos and Jose Joya, pianist Cecile Licad, poet Virgilio Almario and violinist Serafin Payawal.

Beautiful maidens

Mayumo is an apt appendage, according to Buencamino, for the town has produced a bevy of "sweet-smiling beautiful maidens." Trinidad de Leon was queen of the pre-war Manila Carnival before becoming the first lady of President Roxas.

Doña Trining, as she was called, is the grandmother of Trade Secretary Manuel Roxas II. The family of Margie Moran-Floirendo, the second Filipina to win the Miss Universe tilt, hailed from the town.

Buencamino recalls that Gloria Diaz, the first Filipina Miss Universe, although not a native of San Miguel, was discovered for a modeling career in the town.

Of course, Narcisa Buencamino de Leon—Doña Sisang to many—is not only a trailblazer in her town. She, too, is the matriarch of the Philippine movie industry, which she carved through LVN Productions.

If the sweet smiles of the ladies in the town aren't captivating enough, the town offers a walk into the past.

San Miguel, even in this modern age, has dozens of well-preserved historical houses and *bahay na bato*.

The house of Dr. Maximo Viola, who lent money to see Dr. Jose Rizal's "Noli Me Tangere" published, is an imposing structure.

Aguinaldo used the Simon Tecson mansion as his headquarters. Buencamino, citing the eyewitness accounts of Tecson's three heirs, says the pact was signed in that house.

The general's *tintero* (signing set) is believed to be in the care of Josefina Mendiola, one of the heirs married to a Shoemart executive. Aguinaldo's bed is still kept in the mansion.

Gen. Gregorio del Pilar slept in the house of his uncle, Damaso Sempio, before leaving for Isabela. He left in this house his boots, his saber and a unit's flag, unable to return after the massacre at Tirad Pass.

These possessions were all later donated to the provincial government.

You can also find the life-size, century-old mannequins of Christ's 12 Apostles in the Sempio mansion. It is said that all the rice harvest of an entire village in the De Leon estate go into feeding those who join the religious procession of the 12 Apostles during Holy Week.

Another prominent structure—the only three-story building in the town—is the Catalino Sevilla mansion. In the olden days, it had been the permanent venue of the annual ball of the Celia Club, remembered as a "grand social affair" of the "Who's Who" in the country.

The Katipuneros used the houses of the Davids and Teodoro Lim (descendant of former Manila Mayor Alfredo Lim), as well as that of Juan Buencamino's, either for secret meetings or as watchtower against enemy troops.

Yolanda Libunao, a niece of Abelardo's, can sing from childhood memory the composition of the maestro. She can also demonstrate how elaborately designed *pastillas* wrappers are cut only by scissors using deft hands.

In the town, says journalist Jo David Quiambao, residents can turn the pulp of the *pomelo* into an object of art. "We're very artistic people," Quiambao says.

What these are all about is finding roots and seeking the true spirit of the San Migueleños.

"It's really going back to roots and trying to now let the very rich heritage of San Miguel be carried by the current and future generations," explains De la Fuente.

If the efforts are successful, the town can be a prototype of hometown revival. The foundation has made a first step after it raised P250,000 from the revival of a Celia Ball. The amount has been donated to reconstruct the church's façade.

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The **People of Davao** and the **Business Sector**
for making DAVAO CITY THE MOST COMPETITIVE METRO CITY IN THE PHILIPPINES

Lita Pascual, Account Manager
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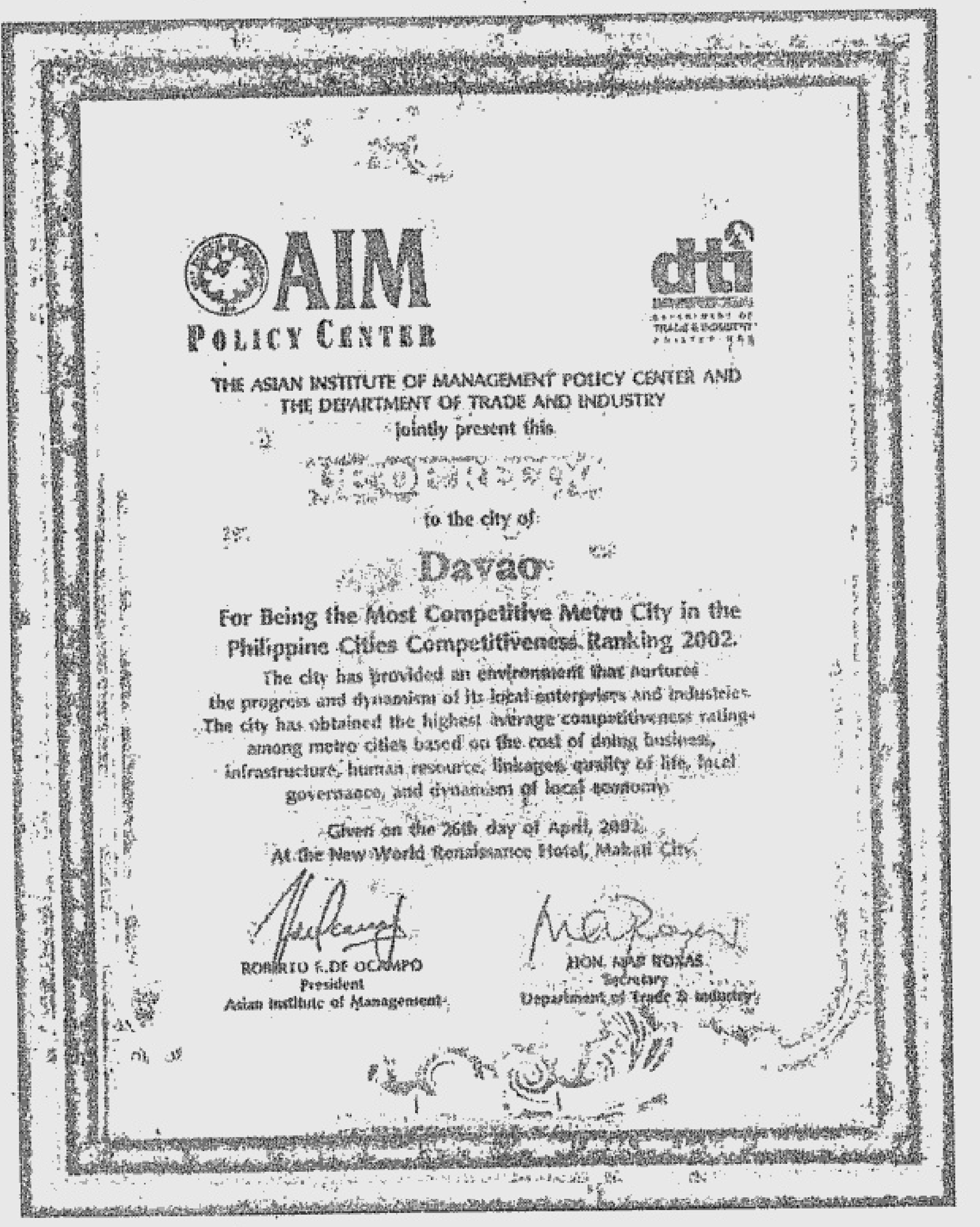

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among metro cities based on the cost of doing business,
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governance, and dynamism of local economy.

Given on the 26th day of April, 2002
At the New World Renaissance Hotel, Makati City.

ROBERTO F. DE OCAMPO
President
Asian Institute of Management

HON. MAR ROXAS
Secretary
Department of Trade & Industry

MESSAGE

We are extremely pleased that Davao City has been adjudged as the Most Competitive Metro City in the Philippines. It is a meaningful recognition of the collective efforts of the people of Davao that made the city not only the best investment location in the country but also the safest urban center to live in.

The award reinforces our firm belief that we have taken the right path towards equitable and sustainable development. It will be a continuing transformation of Davao City from being a laboratory of insurgency in the 1980s to being the most competitive urban center in the new millennium.

We have to stay competitive. We cannot afford to be complacent. Accompanying the recognition are the great challenges for us to face, weaknesses to overcome, strengths to enhance and concrete gains to nurture.

The competitiveness survey helps us recognize our capabilities in improving the standard of living of our people and in cultivating an environment conducive for investment and tourism to flourish.

We commend the Policy Center of the Asian Institute of Management and the Department of Trade and Industry for their sustained initiatives to recognize the best practices in overall economic management by local government units. The observations and insights of the survey will be most useful in policy formulation and management processes. Most of all, it will empower us to strive harder and live up to the distinction of being the Most Competitive Metro City in the country.

We will continue to track the path we have chosen and blaze new trails. We are committed and determined, as always, to improve the quality of life of our people and ensure the sustainable development of our city.

LUIS C. BONGUYAN
Vice Mayor

RODRIGO R. DUTERTE
Mayor

Winning Factors:

- COST OF DOING BUSINESS
- DYNAMISM OF LOCAL ECONOMY
- QUALITY OF LIFE
- LINKAGES WITH GROWTH AREAS
- INFRASTRUCTURE
- QUALITY HUMAN RESOURCES
- RESPONSIVENESS OF LGU TO BUSINESS

DAVAO CITY: Best and Safest Investment Haven

There are a lot of worlds to enjoy and celebrate in Davao City. Aside from being the country's melting pot of diverse cultures, the world's largest city offers a wide array of modern urban amenities such as shopping malls and an active nightlife that readily complement its accessible beaches and abundant supply of fresh seafood and fruits including the exotic Durian

Being typhoon-free, Davao City is a haven for farmers. Major agricultural products include all kinds of fruits, vegetables, coconut and its by-products, cutflowers and poultry and livestock.

The city is identified as a key metropolitan center meant to balance and diffuse the over concentration of economic activity in Metro Manila. National urban development planners eyed the city to become an alternative international node, in order to help lessen the dominance of Metro Manila.

As a growth center, it offers lots of potentials in terms of labor, space, infrastructure, access to raw materials, and other urban amenities that would provide the necessary 'economies of scale' to industries.

Based on employment data, Davao City's five leading economic sectors are light manufacturing, construction, trade and distribution, government and corporate services, and recreational and consumer services, incorporating tourism.

At present the main industries of Davao City are agriculture-based. But it also plays a key role as a leading tourism, manufacturing, and services center in Mindanao and neighboring East ASEAN countries.

For the past years, the main thrust of the city government is towards sustainable, enhanced, balanced and equitable development among the city's economic, social and environment sectors.

To help attain its thrust, the city government has placed peace and order among its top priority programs so that its residents can work productively, enjoy the fruits of their labor and contentedly relax at home, confident that there is peace, security and prosperity in their locality.

Moreover, Davao City is the first local government unit in the country to pass the Business Incentive Code offering incentive package to investors on top of those already granted by the Board of Investment. The Davao City Investment Promotion Center was likewise established to provide assistance to investors in securing business permits and licenses, in availing of local investment incentives, and in identifying possible partners, suitable sites and sources of raw materials.

In the 1990s, Davao City enjoyed tremendous growth. Exports and investments surged at record-breaking levels. But the city was not spared from the general economic slowdown an uncertainty brought about by the Asian economic crisis, the Central Mindanao conflict and the September 11 terrorist attacks.

However, the city's resilient economy is on the way back to the growth path as evidenced by the presence of top 200 companies in the area catering to around 1.2-Million population as their domestic market base.

The robust business climate brought about by new and large investments only reaffirmed Davao City's role of being at the forefront of the country's development and a gateway to the East ASEAN Growth Area. With all the economic and social infrastructures already in place, Davao City's march to development and prosperity will be more hastened and intensified.

Elected Officials of Davao City

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Vice-Mayor: Hon. Luis C. Bonguyan

Councilors-District I
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Hon. Angela A. Librado
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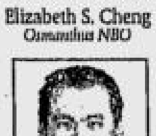
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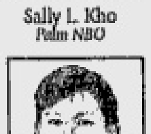
Sally L. Kho
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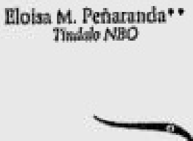
Anthony Frank L. Tan
Osmanthus NBO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Mulawin NBO

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Jose D. Chua*, *Maple NBO*
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Anita C. Pua*, *Palm NBO*
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Alex A. Chua, *Redwood NBO*

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Myra Claire C. Garcia, *Banyan NBO*

SALES MANAGERS

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From page A1

to award the contract for the management of the WESM to the highest bidder, which would result in even higher power costs for Filipinos.

Under Republic Act No. 9136 or the Electric Power Industry Reform Act, power-generating companies shall sell their electricity to the WESM that, in turn, shall bid out such power supply to distribution utilities through their brokers for eventual sale to retailers.

Osmeña likened the workings of the WESM to the stock exchange. The WESM, however, will be engaged in the daily buying and selling of energy by all players in the electric power-generation industry.

"Once the generation companies owned by Napocor are privatized, we can expect these generation companies to compete with each other to generate electricity efficiently to be able to sell their electricity in the WESM at the lowest price possible," Osmeña said.

He noted the so-called Joint Congressional Power Commission mandated to oversee the implementation of RA 9136 was kept in the dark about the bidding of WESM management contract.

Osmeña proposed a Senate inquiry into the bidding of the contract even as the chamber was preparing to investigate the allegedly onerous Napocor contracts with the so-called independent power producers.

Another Osmeña

Sen. John Osmeña said he was filing a resolution asking the committee on energy chaired by Sen. Renato Cayetano to invite former President Fidel Ramos to explain the 42 IPP contracts during his administration.

For his part, Sen. Aquilino Pimentel said he would ask the Senate to also summon former President Joseph Estrada since there were also IPP contracts signed during his administration.

In a press statement, Estrada said he had nothing to do with the IPPs. He suggested that the Senate instead summon Ramos and President Macapagal-Arroyo.

According to John Osmeña, it was unfortunate that President Macapagal prematurely exonerated Ramos of any responsibility on this matter.

"I think that we cannot pass on this responsibility to anybody else. He (Ramos) has to answer for this and that is why I would like to ask the committee (to summon him)," he said.

Osmeña likewise called for a review of a new IPP contract that was being rushed by the Macapagal administration through the Power Sector Liabilities and Assets Management Corp.

Osmeña said the State-Harvin contract was never implemented during the Ramos and Estrada administrations but was being revived by the present administration.

"That should not be the case because the law prohibits any new IPP contracts," he said.

Senate President Franklin Drilon said he would support the Osmeña resolution, saying the IPP contracts must be fully explained to the public.

"Judgments and decisions were made on the basis of what the projected energy needs of the country were. Unfortunately, it did not turn out to be what was projected," Drilon said.

Tutol kami sa PPA!
MAY 16
9-10pm
Patayin ang ating ilaw
MERALCO
YOUTH
MAY 16
9-10pm
PATAYIN
SAMPAL sa PP

THE CAMPAIGN to turn off the lights on Thursday is brought to the fore by youthful protesters in a rally in Sampaloc against Meralco's Purchased Power Adjustment. ERIK ARAZAS

Oreta

Sen. Tessie Aquino-Oreta said clearing Ramos of responsibility this early could lead the committee tasked to review the contracts to water down its findings.

According to her, the head of PSALM, Edgardo del Fonso, has disclosed that five of the 35 IPPs have offered to have their contracts renegotiated.

This, according to Oreta, was an indication that some of the provisions in the transactions were disadvantageous to the government and consumers.

At the House of Representatives, the minority bloc is planning to file a consumers and taxpayers suit to stop Napocor from paying the independent power producers and charging its PPA to the consumers.

Cagayan de Oro Rep. Constantino Jaraula announced the plan in a press conference with House minority leader Carlos Padilla and Zamboanga City Rep. Celso Lobregat yesterday.

"It is only fair that what is not being produced is not paid," Jaraula said. "It is totally and blatantly onerous, unreasonable, unconscionable and immoral." ***With reports from Cynthia D. Balana and Juliet L. Javellana***

2 water firms face Senate probe . . .

From page A1

the peso's depreciation against the dollar.

In his proposed Senate Resolution No. 301, Recto noted that customers of the two private utilities were expected to pay more than P5 per cubic meter of water, on top of the 10-percent environment charge, 50-percent sewerage charge and 10-percent value added tax.

At present, Maynilad Water is soaking its customers by an average rate of P15.46 per cubic meter. Manila Water only charges P6.75 per cubic meter.

Recto said water was fast becoming a luxury for many Metro Manilans.

As it is, they are already groaning under the weight of the hefty purchased power adjustment charge in their electric bills, high rent and fuel price increases.

Another senator said the temporary relief to consumers resulting from President Macapagal-Arroyo's move to reduce the PPA charge of the National Power Corp. would be negated if she were to allow an increase in water rates.

"The least that the Macapagal administration could do is to exercise moral suasion over these big companies to stop their water rate increases to alleviate the plight of ordinary Filipinos," Sen. Tessie Aquino-Oreta said.

She said that Malacañang should nip in the bud the petitions by both water companies to jack up their rates.

"Ignoring pleas to stop Maynilad Water and Manila Water from increasing their rates will only fuel suspicions that Malacañang is coddling these big business groups at the expense of the poor," Oreta added.

Maynilad Water operates in the so-called "west zone," of the metropolis. The zone covers most of Manila; areas west of San Juan River, West Avenue, Edsa, Congressional and Mindanao avenues, Holy Spirit and Batasan Hills in Quezon City; Makati City (west of South Super Highway); Navotas; Malabon; Caloocan City; Pasay City, Parañaque; Las Piñas; Muntinlupa City; and Valenzuela.

Its concession includes areas in Cavite province, such as Bacoor, Imus, Kawit, Noveleta, Rosario and Cavite City.

Manila Water operates in the so-called "east zone." It covers San Andres and Sta. Ana in Manila; areas east of San Juan River, West Avenue, Edsa, Congressional and Mindanao avenues, Tandang Sora, Pasong Tamo and Matandang Balara in Quezon City; areas east of South Super Highway in Makati City; Mandaluyong City; San Juan; Marikina City; Pasig City; Pateros, and Taguig.

Its concession extends to Morong, Angono, Antipolo, Baras, Binangonan, Cainta, Cardona, Jala-Jala, Pililla, Rodriguez, San Mateo, Tanay, Taytay and Teresa in Rizal province.

Erap too rich . . .

From page A1

appointed lawyers from the Public Attorneys Office (PAO) want to quit.

The eight PAO lawyers are following in the heels of their boss who exited from the Estrada case last Monday. Jointly, they asked the Sandiganbayan yesterday to relieve them as well, citing their often-repeated argument that their office only serves poor clients.

If their motion is granted by the court, PAO's complete withdrawal will leave Estrada and co-accused son Jinggoy with only four private counsels de officio for their four criminal cases, including the capital offense of plunder.

On Monday, the special Sandiganbayan division granted the motion of PAO chief Persida Acosta who wanted out citing the mounting administrative tasks she has to attend to and stressed once again the Estradas' "non-indigence."

Eight of her subordinates filed their own ex parte motion seeking their own relief, adopting Acosta's arguments saying these "apply with equal force" to their motion since they belong to the same office.

The lawyers are Joefferson Toribio, Arturo Temanil, Melita Lauron, Silvestre Mosing, Francisco Sanchez III, Wilfredo Andres, Oscar Co, and Maximo Usita Jr.

Well-represented

In their motion, they said that Estrada's "private de oficio counsels appointed by the Honorable Court have shown their ability and competence in representing both of the accused in these cases."

They were referring to lawyers Prospero Crescini, Noel Malaya, Irene Jurado and retired Sandiganbayan Justice Manuel Pamaran.

Hence, PAO's withdrawal from the case will have "no immediate and extensive harm or injury" to the Estradas' rights and interests, they said.

In a phone interview, Acosta said that with PAO now out of the Estrada cases, suspicions that her office was spying for the prosecutors would be dispelled. PAO is under the Department of Justice.

"Delicadesa," (propriety) she said, also partly influenced their decision to be taken off the Estrada cases.

Bail hearing for Jinggoy

The Sandiganbayan has set for today the first hearing on Jinggoy Estrada's revived petition for bail, a move that drew leverage from the Feb. 27 Supreme Court ruling tossing the issue back to the anti-graft court.

Estrada's former lawyers had argued that the young Estrada was entitled to bail since he was cited only in one of the predicate crimes making up the plunder case, namely the jueteng bribery scandal.

On the day Supreme Court ruling came out, the ex-president summarily dismissed his eight private lawyers who were all big names in the legal profession including former Supreme Court Chief Justice Andres Narvasa and former Sen. Rene Saguisag.

A few weeks later, his court-appointed counsels re-filed the bail petition at the anti-graft court as according to the high court's assessment, the young Estrada has yet to exhaust all legal remedies at the level of the Sandiganbayan.

Media condemn crusading . . .

From page A1

Agrarian Reform office of Zamboanga del Sur along Pajares Avenue.

Amoro and another civilian, whose name is being withheld for security reasons, described the gunman as in his late 40s and wearing a flesh-colored jacket and a red scarf on his head. He was riding in the back of a DT Yamaha motorcycle colored black and blue and without a plate number, which was driven by a man wearing a hat, with a police-type haircut and in his early 30s.

"Their faces are very familiar to me," Amoro said in a phone interview. He said he would be able to identify the gunman if he saw him again.

In a strongly worded statement, the 60 publishers and editors of national and community newspapers belonging to the PPI denounced Damalerio's killing and demanded action from Leandro Mendoza, director general of the Philippine National Police, and Reynaldo Wycoco, director of the National Bureau of Investigation.

The Mindanao Institute of Journalism (Minjourn) issued a statement condemning the killing as "an act which can only be perpetrated by cowards and by persons possessing twisted value systems."

"While Edgar may not be a perfect model of a journalist, his courage in exposing corruption and malpractice, among others, is unequalled and is worthy of emulation," Minjourn said.

Planned

Amoro said Damalerio's assailants sped off toward Urro Street after the shooting, but that a few minutes later, one of them returned, cruised the opposite route of Pajares Avenue and disappeared.

"It seems the killing was carried out as planned," Amoro said without explaining.

In a phone interview on Monday, city police chief Supt. Asuri Hawani told the INQUIRER that he and his men were facing the proverbial blank wall. "But we have in our custody several witnesses," he said.

Hawani also said he would look into possible motives.

Damalerio's wife, Gemma, told the INQUIRER that earlier Monday, she and her house companions had noticed two persons on a motorcycle "casing the house."

"I immediately warned (Edgar) through a text message what I noticed around 6 p.m.," Gemma said.

She said Damalerio texted back that he would return home immediately after the press briefing.

"That was the last time he texted me," Gemma said, sobbing. "I don't know what to do. We hope that whoever ordered the killing of my husband would somehow realize the crime they have committed."

Damalerio left a 3-month-old son.

An unidentified male reportedly called the office of the Zamboanga Scribe around 3 p.m. yesterday and warned in the vernacular that "your boss is lucky because he did not get there."

The caller was said to have phoned the Scribe office twice.

An employee of the weekly newspaper claimed to have received a number of mysterious phone calls on Monday afternoon, about five hours before Damalerio was shot.

"But when I asked who was on the line, nobody answered," said the terrified employee.

'Markang X'

In his opinion column titled "Markang X" and his radio commentaries, Damalerio crossed powerful people in the community.

Among them were former Environment Secretary Antonio Cerilles; his wife, Zamboanga del Sur Gov. Aurora Cerilles; Pagadian City Mayor Warlito Pulmones; and Vice Mayor Henrieto Dogon, whom Damalerio sued for graft.

The graft case stemmed from the city's purchase of six Chariot vehicles estimated at P6 million last year. The case is pending before the office of the Ombudsman-Mindanao.

Damalerio also criticized Senior Supt. Pedrito Reyes and Superintendent Hawani on several occasions.

He chided the two police officials for their failure to curb the trade in illegal drugs, the "video karera" and illegal numbers games, and the spate of killings and car thefts in the city and Zamboanga del Sur.

During his 5-6:30 p.m. radio program, Radyo Ronda, Damalerio regularly lambasted Governor Cerilles and Hawani.

He reportedly obtained a copy of Cerilles' letter addressed to San Pablo Mayor Rolando Dolauta allegedly urging the latter to file a petition opposing the proposed construction of an extension regional hospital in San Miguel town.

The project is funded by the pork barrel of Zamboanga del Sur Rep. Felomina San Juan, a political rival of the governor.

Governor Cerilles has denied writing the supposed letter to Dolauta.

In the past, Damalerio also chided Cerilles for the purging of some 1,200 regular City Hall employees. ***With a report from Romulo Ponte, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau***

(Hernan P. dela Cruz is the publisher of the Zamboanga Scribe.-ED.)

Salesians want boy subjected to DNA test

From page A1

said the scandal had shattered her family's respect for the Salesian order, enough for her two siblings—a priest and a brother—to temporarily leave the congregation.

Fr. Francis Gustilo, head of the Salesians of Don Bosco (SDB), said the DNA test would put the issue to rest.

He said that he proposed DNA testing to the woman as early as 2000, and that he even made arrangements for the procedure with Dr. Raul Fores, head of the Makati Medical Center.

Gustilo said he had convinced Sta. Maria to agree to return to the Philippines in September, when the latter's three-year stint in Florida ends.

He also told the INQUIRER that he would write a letter of apology to the woman. "Nine years is too long," he said.

September

The woman, however, said she could not understand why she and her son had to wait until September for the priest to take the test.

"If he is innocent, if he is not hiding anything, shouldn't it be normal for him to rush home as soon as possible to prove his innocence?" she said. "And if his congregation is not hiding anything, should it not order him to come home immediately to save the SDB from embarrassment?"

According to Gustilo, Sta. Maria is bound by a "contract" to serve in Florida until September.

Gustilo reiterated that neither he nor his congregation had been remiss in addressing the issue.

But he admitted that not much was done to help the boy because the woman refused any help early on and the congregation did not hear from her for six years.

Gustilo, who assumed his current post three years ago, also said his predecessors had offered to help the woman but that she refused.

Earlier, the woman told the INQUIRER that she had refused financial help from the SDB because its officials insisted on calling it "aid" when what she was seeking was "child support."

The woman said yesterday that her family had greatly suffered because of the scandal and could no longer view the SDB with respect.

She said she landed the job as Sta. Maria's secretary when he served as principal of the Don Bosco High School in Makati City because of her family's closeness with the missionary order.

The woman said her mother had supplied uniforms and other items to the school, and her two brothers studied there for the priesthood.

"You can say that we are really part of the Salesian family," she said. "Well, that was before Sta. Maria came into our lives, mine especially."

Flight attendant

In Laoag City, a younger brother of the late Fr. Santiago Tamayo Jr., who was implicated in the alleged sexual abuse of a would-be nun in Los Angeles almost 20 years ago, said the Catholic hierarchy in California had allowed the priest to live with a Visayan woman with whom he had two children.

Ray Tamayo said his brother was involved with a former flight attendant but not with Rita Milla, the aspiring nun.

Milla had earlier said Father Tamayo and six other priests sexually abused her when she was 16 years old.

But in separate interviews on Monday with the INQUIRER and the local radio station Bombo Radyo, Ray Tamayo defended his brother from accusations of having fathered Milla's daughter, Jacqueline, now 19.

He said Father Tamayo got involved and actually lived with the former flight attendant in California until his death in 1999. He said the Los Angeles diocese allowed the priest to live with the woman and their two children.

Father Tamayo died in Los Angeles at 63 after undergoing surgery for a blood clot in the brain.

"The Church knew about (the relationship)," Ray Tamayo said. "My brother was given a dispensation (a special exemption) to live with her and their two children."

He said the woman, known only as Lynn, regularly went to Mass at Father Tamayo's parish church.

Pain, not shame

Ray Tamayo said the news linking his brother to the sex scandal in Los Angeles was more "painful" than "shameful" to his family in Laoag.

"If my father were still alive and learned about this, he would have died of a heart attack," he said.

He also said their parents had admitted to them that the priest sired two children with Lynn. When the priest died in 1999, Lynn called the Tamayos.

Ray Tamayo said that while they never got to see Lynn, the priest took one of his children with him during a vacation to the Philippines in the early 1980s.

Asked how he felt about Milla's revelations against his brother, Ray Tamayo said: "I am hurt because we treated her well when she came to the Philippines and stayed at my brother Eddie's house. We treated her like our own sister. I even took her out and paid for her restaurant bills."

Both Ray and Eddie Tamayo, a doctor, expressed the belief that Milla knew the priest who got her pregnant.

"I mailed letters for her to California," Ray Tamayo said. "I secretly opened those letters and found out she was asking for support from a certain priest there, not from my brother."

Milla recently asked Roger Cardinal Mahoney of Los Angeles to help her find the priest who got her pregnant.

She said the diocese tried to cover up the abuse she allegedly suffered from the seven priests while she was aspiring to be a nun. She accused the diocese of arranging for her trip to the Philippines to keep her pregnancy a secret.

Milla arrived in the Philippines in 1983 and spent the large part of her pregnancy at Eddie Tamayo's house in Laoag.

She delivered the baby at the Ilocos Norte Provincial Hospital and later returned to the United States

4 Liechtenstein execs bound by bank secrecy laws

From page A1

anti-money laundering expert, submitted to Executive Secretary Alberto Romulo.

Sprenger is also the president of Limag Management und Verwaltungs AG or Limag AG, where at least $400 million in Marcos money was transferred in 1986. Limag AG has very close links to Credit Suisse Trust.

"Limag AG is physically located in the same building as Credit Suisse Trust AG in Vaduz, Liechtenstein," Chaikin said in the executive summary he submitted to Romulo.

Based on his investigation, Chaikin found out that Sprenger became a director of Limag AG after Dr. Ivo Beck, a known Marcos asset manager and former chair of Limag AG, died in September 1991.

"In effect, Dr. Sprenger 'inherited' Limag AG from Dr. Ivo Beck who was the original president of Limag AG. Similarly, Dr. Sprenger 'inherited' another Liechtenstein company, Administral Anstalt, from Dr. Beck," Chaikin said.

Law firm

Sprenger is also a senior partner of the Vaduz law firm Sprenger, Kolzhoff, Ospelt. He has acted as outside counsel to the government-owned Liechtenstein bank, Liechtensteinischer Landesbank AG, in the litigation involving the collapse of London United Investments.

Chaikin said documents found in Malacañang Palace in 1986 showed that Siegfried was an authorized signatory of Limag AG in Credit Suisse on accounts held for the following Marcos Liechtenstein foundations: Vibur Foundation, Avertina Foundation, and Spinus Foundation.

"The official Liechtenstein corporate records of Limag AG confirm that Ulrich Siegfried was vice president of Limag AG in 1978 when Dr. Ivo Beck was President. Ulrich Siegfried continued to have a significant role in Limag AG until at least March 1998," Chaikin said.

Herzog is associated with four companies belonging to the KPMG Group:

- KPMG Fides Management AG in Zurich Ltd., which provides central administrative services.
- KPMG Fides in Zurich Ltd., which provides fiduciary services.
- KPMG Holding in Zurich Ltd.
- KPMG Private in Zurich Ltd., which provides asset and wealth management services.

Kohler, von Pfafers in Mels, is associated with the following entities in the KPMG Group: KPMG Fides Peat in Zurich Ltd.; and KPMG Private un Zurich Ltd.

KPMG provides fiduciary services and asset management services to high net worth individuals.

Limag AG, KPMG and Credit Suisse are linked, and had been involved in keeping and hiding Marcos money at some point.

Swiss bank records provided by Swiss authorities in 1991 to the Presidential Commission on Good Government (PCGG) showed the relationship between Limag and Credit Suisse.

"There were a number of remittances to Limag Mgt. amounting to SF1,500, which were usually done every six months. These could represent management service fee," said a PCGG document titled an "Analysis of Swiss documents."

Joint signatories

Limag Management and Administration and Beck were in fact appointed to the board of Avertina Foundation "who will jointly sign in twos for the foundation," said the official certification of Avertina Foundation dated May 13, 1981 from the Office of the Public Register in Vaduz. The INQUIRER obtained a copy of the certification.

Sources said Limag AG and Beck, when he was still alive, were needed by the Marcoses to get to their funds in Avertina Foundation because of their joint signatory function for the foundation.

"There is a paucity of information about Limag AG apart from the official Liechtenstein corporate records," Chaikin said.

He said that Limag AG was registered as a fiduciary in Liechtenstein and had an extremely low profile, even by Liechtenstein standards.

Corporate records disclosed that Limag AG was first registered in Liechtenstein on Feb. 28, 1978 by Beck with a capital of 100,000 in Swiss francs. Its initial directors were Siegfried and Beck. Administral Anstalt was designated as the representative office for service of documents.

The company has also had a number of board changes, according to Dr. Chaikin.

Directors and other persons identified in the corporate registry include:

- Herbert Kindle
- Peter Kaiser
- S D Prinz Constantin von Liechtenstein—the late uncle of the current Prince Hans Adam II of Liechtenstein.
- Prokurist Dr iur Marie Zindel—business partner of Engelbert Schreiber who was the liquidator of Sandy Anstalt accounts at the Union Bank of Switzerland believed to be the hidden accounts of Irene Marcos Araneta.

There are currently five persons with authority to sign at Limag AG: President Dr. Sprenger; Vice Director Urs Leiser; and Representatives Susanne Duenser, Mr. Oliver Horstettler, and Ms Michele Kunz.

Limag AG's current address in the Swiss/Liechtenstein Yellow Pages is Pradafant 21, 9490 Vaduz, the same address of Credit Suisse Trust AG in Vaduz.

Question Imelda, Jovy urges PCGG

From page A1

The PCGG says it does not want to interrogate Mrs. Marcos and Irene Marcos Araneta on the fund transfers, because the two will just cite their right against self-incrimination.

PCGG Chair Haydee Yorac had earlier said the PCGG could not just summon the Marcoses, particularly Irene Araneta, on her money-laundering attempt in Germany for the same reason.

The PCGG yesterday said it would not comment yet on the involvement of royalty and other personalities in Liechtenstein in the transfer of $400 million in Marcos money to the principality from Switzerland.

The transfer of the money was disclosed by a new witness, known as Madame Z, who has offered to provide the Philippine government information in exchange for $225,000 and 2 percent of any funds recovered from Liechtenstein and Switzerland.

Francisco Chavez, former solicitor general, said the government should now "exert pressure" on the Swiss government so that it would "conduct the necessary investigation of the blatant perpetration of fraud against the Philippine government and the Filipino people."

He said the information from Madame Z, a Canadian-Welsh barrister and solicitor, showed that there was conspiracy among the Swiss banks holding Marcos funds, certain Liechtenstein foundations, Swiss authorities such as former District Attorney Peter Cosandey, and firms such as KPMG.

Real identity

Chavez said the PCGG knew about the existence of Madame Z as early as September last year, and that it knew about the witness' identity.

Chavez himself knows the real name of the witness as he has a copy of the letter from her lawyers from the US firm Blank Rome Comisky & McCauley. The letter provides initial information on her testimony, and the conditions set by the lawyers for her testimony.

But Chavez said the conditions set by the lawyers that included payment of $125,000 before the government could interview the witness, and an additional $100,000 upon completion of the initial interviews, were "onerous." The amounts are apart from attorneys' fees.

Like Salonga, David Chaikin, an anti-money laundering law expert, urged the PCGG to summon and interrogate the Marcoses involved in the money transfers.

Chaikin, a former senior fraud officer of the London-based Commonwealth Secretariat, specifically mentioned Irene Marcos Araneta who had tried to launder Marcos funds from Union Bank of Switzerland to Deutsche Bank in Dusseldorf, Germany, in February last year.

He said the PCGG should also urge Swiss authorities to interrogate the witnesses in Switzerland and Liechtenstein named by Madame Z as having been involved in the Marcos fund transfers.

Chaikin, lawyer for Australian investigator Reiner Jacobi, said the PCGG's failure to interrogate the Marcoses and the Swiss and Liechtenstein participants on the fund transfers was unfair to the Filipino people.

Chaikin has taken part in mutual assistance involving 20 countries, including Switzerland, for more than 20 years.

He said he knew "when another country is not properly responding."

Nigerian dictator

Chaikin said other countries, including those listed as very corrupt such as Nigeria, had sought the interrogation of witnesses in Switzerland involved in hiding wealth stolen by former Nigerian leader Sani Abacha.

Just recently, the Swiss authorities ordered the return to Nigeria of $1 billion looted by the late dictator Abacha. The order came three years after Swiss authorities issued a freeze order on the funds.

"The Philippines hasn't even asked that (interrogation of witnesses). Does that mean that the Philippines is worse than Nigeria?" Chaikin said.

"The PCGG doesn't even take the first step. The PCGG is the one claiming that the Marcoses or even the Swiss and Liechtenstein witnesses will cite the right against self-incrimination, when they are being asked to subpoena or interrogate them," he said.

"Why not call them in? Virtually, any investigator will laugh at the way the PCGG conducts itself. They (those in the PCGG) are supposed to be sophisticated lawyers," Chaikin said.

Commenting on the PCGG's reluctance to use Madame Z's information, Chaikin said the PCGG's response was so defensive that it appeared to be hiding something.

He took exception of the PCGG's claim that the information provided by the witness was not new.

"There's a world of difference between having some general documentary information, which suggests that there had been an evasion of the freeze order, and having a statement from a witness detailing the evasion of the freeze, the amount of money involved, where it went to, and the parties involved," Chaikin said.

Exasperated

"If they can't understand the difference of this, then God help the Philippines," he said in exasperation.

"The PCGG response is completely misleading of the facts. First of all, they didn't know about the $400 million transfer prior to receiving the letter from the American law firm. They also didn't know that the Liechtenstein royal family was involved. They're trying to obscure what they know or didn't know," he said.

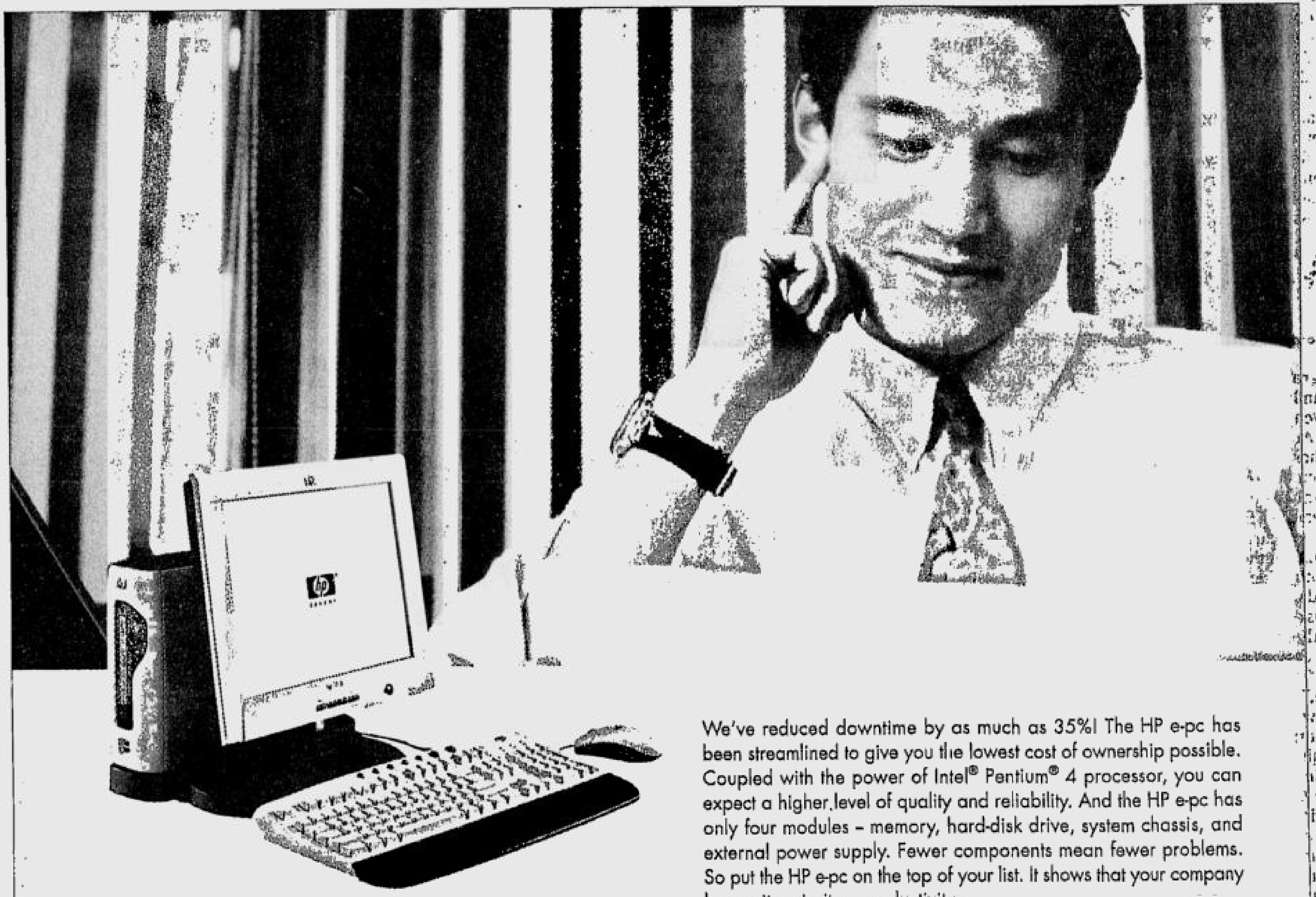
"The PCGG reaction speaks for itself. The way they reacted is another argument as to why they should be abolished," Chaikin said.

He noted that the PCGG had consistently failed to act with any determination on leads involving the Marcos hidden funds, and would just cling to what its Swiss lawyer would suggest in not antagonizing Swiss authorities.

"There is now overwhelming evidence that the PCGG has failed to fulfill its mandate in tracking the overseas assets of the Marcos family and has become a sycophantic pawn in the hands of its Swiss and Liechtenstein lawyers," Chaikin wrote to Executive Secretary Alberto Romulo.

"The PCGG is so scared of upsetting the Swiss authorities that it will not make any request if it can antagonize the Swiss in even the slightest fashion," he said.

"The PCGG under the present leadership is no different from the PCGG under the Estrada administration and that's extremely disappointing. History will show that the PCGG has once again missed a golden opportunity to put pressure on Swiss authorities," Chaikin said.



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SPORTS

Editor **Al S. Mendoza** ◎ *Assistant Editor* **Edwin M. Villanueva**

500 taekwondo-jins clash May 19

AROUND 500 taekwondo-jins from Metro Manila and the provinces are expected to vie for honors in the 8th Milo All-Women's taekwondo Championships on May 19 at the Ninoy Aquino Stadium. According to Philippine Taekwondo Association president Robert N. Aventajado, the country's leading and aspiring female jins will compete in three categories—senior, junior and gradeschool (by age and height).

PBA SAMSUNG CUP FINALS

Aces outsteady Hotdogs for 2-0 edge

GAME TOMORROW
(Araneta Coliseum)
6:30 p.m.—Purefoods vs Alaska

By June Navarro

ALASKA held its fort in double overtime to defeat Purefoods, 106-102, and secure a commanding 2-0 lead in the PBA Samsung Governors Cup Finals last night at the Araneta Coliseum.

Tired but steadfast, Ron Riley, James Head, Don Allado and John Arigo scored the needed baskets in the second extension as the Aces moved closer to an 11th franchise title.

The Aces could have won in the first extra five minutes had swingman Bryan Gahol converted one of two golden opportunities in the dying seconds.

Gahol flubbed a freethrow from a potential three-point play with 8.9 seconds remaining and threw away a finger roll as time expired, forcing the second overtime.

Arigo missed a game-clinching running jumper with three ticks remaining in regulation during the first extension period.

But for a while the Aces seemed headed for a cruise as Riley accounted for 16 of Alaska's 28 points in the third quarter.

With Riley hitting three of his team's five triples at that time, the Aces slowly broke loose,71-62, from the Hotdogs.

It was also the same intensity displayed by the Aces in the first half before the Hotdogs stole the game away.

Riding the wave of their 79-73 victory last Sunday, the Aces came out pumped with confidence as they dictated the tempo every inch of the way.

From a 22-21 edge in the first 10 minutes, the Aces maintained composure and kept the momentum on their side to protect a 43-40 lead at the end of the first half.

The Aces shot 48 percent from the floor, collared more rebounds than the Hotdogs, 18-12, and dished out more assists, 8-5, but were unable to stop the high-scoring Derrick Brown, who scored more than half of Purefoods' halftime output.

Scores:

ALASKA 106—Riley 43, Head 21, Allado 15, Gahol 8, Arigo 7, Santos 5, Lastimosa 5, Walkvist 2, Noble 0, Reyes 0.

PUREFOODS 102—Brown 45, Raymundo 16, Magsanoc 15, Patrimonio 14, Price 12, Evangelista 0, Balingit 0, Yee 0.

Quarters: 22-21; 43-40; 71-62; 84-84; 93-93; 106-102

UP Maroons score, fortify 'Martin' bid

THE UNIVERSITY of the Philippines' Fighting Maroons crushed University of Northern Philippines, 93-65, Sunday to fortify their semifinal bid in the senior division of the 8th Fr. Martin Cup basketball tournament at the UE gym.

With their fourth win in five games, the Maroons inched closer to Group A frontrunner Adamson University, which nosed out Mapua, 55-51, to improve its record to 4-0, in the tourney supported by Pagcor.

Early last week, the Maroons routed San Beda B, 80-62.

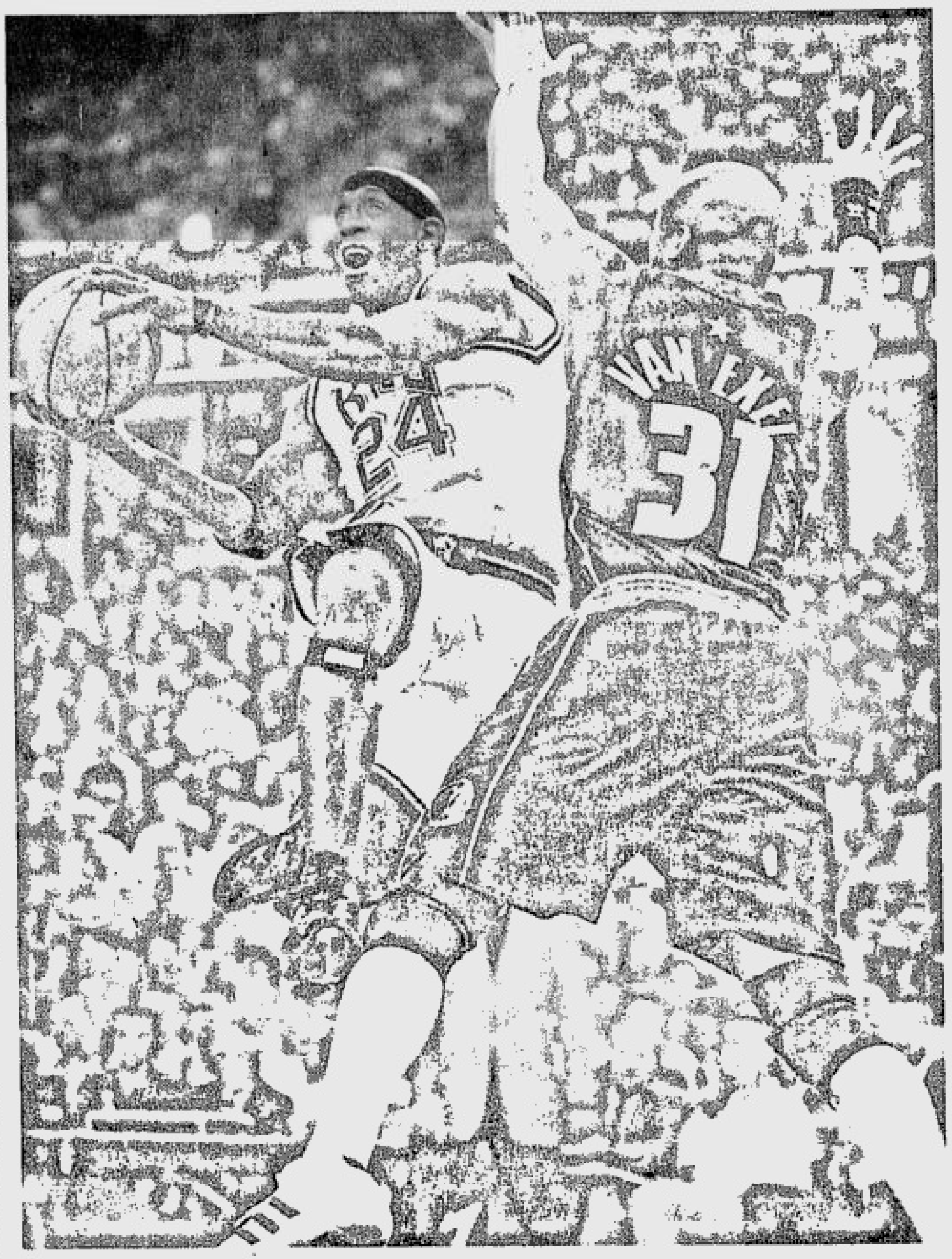
The UST Tigers grabbed solo Group B leadership last Tuesday by surprising defending champion Far Eastern University, 83-80, for their fifth straight win. But the Tams bounced back last Saturday with a lopsided 89-45 victory over the San Beda Lions to keep second place at 4-1.

Reigning NCAA champion San Sebastian firmed up its lead in Group C by trouncing Angelicum, 74-57, for its fifth victory.

In other senior matches, Mapua nipped Letran, 74-70; San Beda nosed out Ateneo B. 64-60; University of Assumption topped San Beda A, 75-67; UE tripped TIP, 67-64; PCU edged FEU B. 77-76; Letran walloped Ateneo A, 80-64; Ateneo B beat Arellano University, 80-61; and National University toppled TIP, 96-83.

GMA, Roco meet reset

THE PLANNED meeting between President Arroyo and Education Secretary Raul Roco to decide the fate of the 2002 Palarong Pambansa, was reset for today, according to Rep. Monico Puentevella of Bacolod. Chair Eric Buhain of the Philippine Sports Commission said Roco was due last night from a trip abroad. He said he was earlier informed Roco arrived on Sunday. Roco, who failed to join Puentevella, Buhain, Naga Mayor Jessie Robredo and Executive Secretary Alberto Romulo in a Malacañang meeting last week, was in Shanghai on an official trip, according to Puentevella.



KINGS REIGN

Sacramento Kings' Bobby Jackson (with ball) drives past Dallas Mavericks' Nick Van Excel during their Game 5 encounter yesterday in the NBA Western Conference semifinals. The Kings won, 114-101, to win the playoffs, 4-1. Chris Webber and Mike Bibby each scored 23 points for the Kings, who will enter the Western Conference finals for the first time since 1981. REUTERS

La Salle seeks solo lead; Shark struggling

STANDINGS	W	L
ICTSI-La Salle	7	3
Ateneo-Hapee	7	3
Ana Freezers	6	4
Kutitap	6	4
Blu Sun Power	5	4
Shark Energy	5	5
John O	5	5
Montaña	2	8
RP Youth	0	7

GAMES TODAY (Makati Coliseum)
1:45 p.m.—RP Youth vs Blu Sun
4 p.m.—Shark Energy vs Montaña
6 p.m.—ICTSI-La Salle vs John O

By Dennis U. Eroa

LA Salle will play minus deadly playmaker Mike Cortez when it seeks the solo lead against John O at six o'clock tonight in the PBL Chairman's Cup at the Makati Coliseum.

Nicknamed Cool Cat, the six-foot-flat Cortez flew to Los Angeles on Saturday due to personal reasons. Cortez, known for his daredevil drives and pinpoint passes, and Ateneo slotman Enrico Villanueva are pacing the hotly contested MVP race.

The Green Archers share the lead with rivals Ateneo Blue Eagles with similar 7-3 cards. Both La Salle and Ateneo have already bagged semifinals seats.

Blu Sun Power battles winless RP Youth at 1:45, following by the clash between defending champion Shark Energy Drink and Montaña Jewels at 4 p.m.

Shark needs to win to stay in contention.

Pastor, Retuya Toyota Cup favorites

ALL eyes will be on the unpredictable Formula Toyota Cup this weekend in the second leg of the 2002 Casino Filipino Grand Prix at the Batangas Racing Circuit in Barangay Maligaya, Rosario, Batangas.

TEC-Shell's Carlos Pastor and Cebuano Joel Retuya of Shell Racing Team dispute the solo leadership following their rousing victories in the kickoff leg of this event sanctioned by the Automotive Association of the Philippines (formerly PMA) and sponsored by the Batangas Racing Circuit Association (BRCA) Board of Governors, Pilipinas Shell, Toyota Motors Phil., MOF Shipping, Norkis-Yamaha, Marlboro, Casino Filipino, Kilton Motors Corp. and the Philippine Charity Sweepstakes Office through general manager Ver Angelo.

"After getting the initial feel of the race last month, these drivers will come up with adjustments to fortify their chances of winning. So expect the Formula Toyota Cup race to be more thrilling this time," said Batangas Racing Circuit Association Gov. Lot M. Tan.

Uy upsets Marave

CARMONA, Gavite—Mofo's Allan Uy upset defending champion Pepon Marave on Sunday in the fourth leg of the 2002 Shell Karting Super Series at the Carmona Circuit Philippines. Uy, last year's Intercon-A champion who topped the two heats, diced against Fotura Racing's Marave in the early goings until the 11th lap where he jacked up with a fastest lap time of 43.380 en route to victory.

Potenciano off

FOLLOWING his superb finish in the inaugural Asian Formula 2000 races, veteran Mike Potenciano will try to bring honor again to the Philippines in this weekend's Asian Festival of Speed's AF 2000 series in Johor, Malaysia. His trip is sponsored by zed, Gulf Oil, Dickies, BLTBCo. and MP Turbo. Potenciano will try to better his second- and third-place finishes in Subic last April 14. 'We are thrilled that our partners in racing have supported our AFOS race program," Potenciano before he left for Singapore en route to the southern tip of Malaysia.

DHL, WWW back RP Amateur

WORLD courier DHL Worldwide Express and Wide Wide World (WWW) Express back the Philippine Amateur Golf Championship as title sponsors with EagleRidge Golf and Country Club as the host club.

Eagle Ridge's challenging Faldo and Dye course will be used for the six-day tourney that will feature the country's best low handicappers from the national training pool, jungolf ranks and the business sector.

"We are certainly honored to be again given the opportunity to support an event with such prestige as the RP amateur," said Mike Fitzpatrick, Country Manager DHL Worldwide Express.

Fitzpatrick was joined by Joe Feliciano, president of Wide Wide World (WWW) Express and National Golf Association of the Philippines president Rod Feliciano in the formal signing of sponsorship agreements recently.

The organizing NGAP, meanwhile, announced that interested participants only have until Friday, May 17 to sign up either at EagleRidge or the NGAP office at tel. nos. 525-6987 or 524-5160. Entry fee is P1,500 inclusive of a practice round also on Friday.

PAL rescues jungolfers

IN DANGER of losing its top bets in the Junior World golf championships this July in San Diego, California, due to the dearth of sponsors, local hopes of ending a long drought in America got a welcome boost with the country's flag-carrier Philippine Airlines, coming to the rescue.

PAL will be fully supporting the contingent by providing the circuit's top performers with tickets on its non-stop Manila-Los Angeles-Manila route.

The Junior World is the annual gathering of the globe's best players aged 17 years and below. It is where the likes of superstars Tiger Woods, Ernie Els and Phil Mickelson as well as Fil-Am sensation Dorothy Delasin started their careers.

There will be close to 4,000 youngsters from 40 countries seeing action in this year's Junior World and only about 22 will be coming from the Philippines.

When money overruns honor

SPECTATOR

Al S. Mendoza

I APOLOGIZE to our readers who called to point out our inability to publish yesterday the results of the Austrian Grand Prix. The culprit: Space limitations.

For the record, Michael "Schumi" Schumacher won the race on orders of his bosses.

How's that again?

Schumi wasn't supposed to win. Rubens Barrichello was.

Barrichello, the Brazilian ace, was just a breadth away from winning his first race since 2000 when, suddenly, he was ordered by his Ferrari bosses to slow down and give the victory to his teammate Schumi, the German lightning.

Schumi was running second to Barichello when the orders came and both were mere seconds away from the finish line.

The Ferrari owners admitted giving the orders, citing Formula 1 rules to cloak their unpopular decision, which was met by a thunder of boos that echoed far into the Alps.

Schumacher said he was unhappy with his victory, his fifth after six legs of the season.

Barrichello said he was unhappy, too. A victory would have been a huge gift to his wife, who was celebrating her birthday that day.

The issue touches both legal and moral grounds.

Because the rules allowed it, it was legally correct for Barrichello to hand the victory to Schumi, who is gunning for a record-tying fifth Formula 1 crown.

It wasn't morally correct, though, thus the jeers from the crowd, who are usually the last bastion of sportsmanship in any competition.

When one wins when he is not supposed to win, something's wrong somewhere. In the issue at hand, it's the rule. It's got to be killed.

Owners don't drive; they just hire. They should be disallowed to order their drivers to take a dive because driving and hiring are worlds apart. By doing what they have done in Austria, the Ferrari bosses drove away the last shred of decency in Formula 1.

Schumi said he thought of disobeying the order. Barrichello said he took the order with a heavy heart.

If this were a movie, they might have disobeyed the orders. Real life drama is oftentimes farthest from fiction.

Can you blame both for obeying orders?

I guess not.

Listen. Schumi is paid $40 million a year driving for Ferrari. That's not peanuts, a drop in the bucket so-called. Schumi achieving a fifth Formula 1 crown would translate into millions, if not billions, of dollars for Ferrari.

Barrichello's driving contract has just been extended up to 2004. By heeding his bosses' orders and not his heart, he may even have unwittingly extended his contract to 2014. To be a Ferrari driver is the zenith of a racer's dream.

Schumi may be the greatest Formula 1 driver at the moment and Barrichello the best in Austria on Sunday. But, sadly, they are mere foot soldiers when you come down to it. And, as foot soldiers, they are a pair of push-button robots, puppets on a string.

What do they know about decision-making?

They decide to drive their best at all times, but not all of the time.

Owners pick the winner at their whims and caprices. Drivers merely follow orders or else, they ruin their career.

What career are we talking about here?

A career bathed in money, not honor.

Forest Hills slots opened

WITH the overflow of interested participants due to popular demand, tournament officials have decided to open up additional team slots in The Forest Hills Invitational slated on May 23-26 at the Forest Hills Golf Club.

This first major member-guest golf tournament of Forest Hills, organized by the club's Sports and Games Committee, is being co-presented by Taylor Made—Adidas and Golforce Inc. together with major sponsors AST Security Corp., Joey @ 92.3 and Pisanti.

According to club chair, lawyer Ferdinand T. Santos, the influx of golfers who want to join the event typifies the steady increase in popularity of the Antipolo-based world-class golf course.

"This is an excellent opportunity for the club members to showcase to their guests the beauty of the Jack Nicklaus-designed golf course that is characterized by natural rolling hills, narrow fairways and fast greens," Santos said.

A brand new Toyota Corolla courtesy of Toyota Motors Philippines and a Club Car golf cart from the Turf Company are at stake as a hole-in-one prizes.

It's Greenhills 1

DEFENDING overall champion Greenhills 1 showed it has not lost any of its clout in winning the crown last year as it made its presence felt right in the first round of the Nokia Intervillage East eliminations Monday at the Manila Golf and Country Club. Greenhills 1 amassed a total 284 points behind three 38-point cards and pulled away by 12 points over Valle Verde 1 (272) and 13 over Casa Verde (271). Mulong Santos, a 15 handicapper, Manuel Bernabe and Benson Lim carded the three 38 scores for Greenhills 1 with Pete Lavarro coming in with a 36.

SPORTS ON TV

Compiled by Lorenzo Manguiat

BASKETBALL: NBA Playoffs Conference Semifinals – Boston vs Detroit, Game 5 at 8 a.m. (r - 9 p.m.), San Antonio at LA Lakers, Game 5 at 10:30 a.m. (midnight) on ESPN

TENNIS: Masters Series (Hamburg), Early Round Coverage Day #1 at 9 a.m. (r), Day # 2 at 11:30 p.m. on Star Sports

BLAST FROM THE PAST

TODAY in 1987, Ramon Brobio shot an even par 71 to place second in the Class A division of the 1987 Asian Juniors golf championship in South Korea.

'Fistiana' law should be amended

CLEAN LIVING

Manolo R. Iñigo

DATING back to 1955, Republic Act No. 1373, now popularly known as the Fiesta Fistiana law, should be amended by Congress to also include death benefits for Filipino professional boxers because the present law only grants cash assistance for needy former boxers who are still alive.

Authored by the late Serafin Salvador, a Rizal congressman who had a passion for boxing and a big heart for the Filipino boxers, the landmark law authorizes the Philippine Sportswriters Association (PSA) to hold one benefit boxing show every year, the net proceeds of which shall constitute a trust fund for destitute and disabled ex-boxers. The benefit boxing shows promoted by the PSA shall be exempt from all taxes while the income of the benefit shows shall be administered by the Disabled Filipino Boxers Trust Fund board of trustees composed of the chair of the Games and Amusements Board as chair and a representative of the Philippine Boxing Association and the PSA as members. Clearly, the "Fistiana" law does not include granting death benefits for the poor and long-exploited Filipino boxers. Where is fairness here? It's high time the Fiesta Fistiana law is amended to make it truly meaningful for the family of boxers who died in ring-related incidents like Maruel Zayas, who succumbed last month in Tarlac under woeful circumstances.

The Fiesta Fistiana is an annual charity card which enjoyed tremendous following in the 1960s. However, it was overtaken by events, becoming dormant in later years. But in 1996, Speaker Jose de Venecia and then Deputy Speaker Raúl Daza, a diehard boxing man who is now the governor of Northern Samar, came to the rescue, asking the PSA (then headed by yours truly) to revive the worthy undertaking. Not to run away from a good fight, the association accepted the challenge and promoted the benefit card which raised a substantial amount (the biggest ever on record) for the needy boxers. More importantly, the PSA, supported by CPA-lawyer Antonio Lucero, submitted the proceeds to an audit by the independent accounting firm Sycip Gorres Velayo and Co. setting a fine example for all fund-raisers. The SGV audit was well-received and elicited a favorable response from all sectors, including the major sponsors such as San Miguel Corp., Philippine Long Distance Co., Philippine Amusement and Gaming Corp. and Philippine Air Lines.

Thus far, some 40 destitute and disabled ex-boxers, among them the ill-fated Rolando Navarette, Pretty Boy Lucas and Pedro Adigue, have received financial assistance from the trust fund. And just recently, GAB chair Eduardo Villanueva said that he would ask the PSA, now headed by Manila Standard's Bert Cuevas, to stage another Fiesta Fistiana this year.

SPORTSWATCH

Buenavista off to Bangkok

EDUARDO Buenavista leaves for Bangkok today for the three-leg Asian Grand Prix which culminates with the Philippines hosting the final stop on May 26 at the Rizal Memorial track oval. Buenavista, the 23-year-old General Santos City long distance runner who had successful stints in the 2001 Southeast Asian Games and this year's Adidas King One-Mile in Hong Kong, will join six Asian tracksters in the 3,000 and 5,000 meters in Bangkok for one day then proceeds to India for the first leg on May 18. From there, Buenavista and coach Luis Artiaga fly back to Bangkok for the second leg on May 21 then home in Manila for the third leg. "Buenavista is one of our top bets in the coming Asian Games in Busan, Korea. He needs this kind of exposure for his bid in his favorite event the 3,000 steeplechase and 5,000 meters in the Asian Games," said Go Teng Kok, head of the Philippine Amateur Track and Field Association.

3 set NCA 7-cock derby pace

COCKER of the Year frontrunners R&B Farm 1 of Rep. Claude Bautista and Boyboy Roa and Firefly Thunderbird 13 of the Firefly Group secured three stirring wins late Monday night to set the pace in the NCA 7-Cock Derby which enters its four-cock finals this evening at the air-conditioned Araneta Coliseum. Hosted by lawyer-sportsman Rudy Salud, Lito Orillaza, Mario Villamor and the Firefly National Cockers, 13 other entries remained in strong contention by posting two-points each. These were Winning Time DVH Jobo I, Phoenix, Ucap International-June 4, 6 and 8, RT 114 Mapalad, I, Fantastic Kalvin, Mulawin, Argem Coliseum, BL Laura, Batang Cabu, Combine Harvester, Binangonan SMV, BPZ Sunshine, R&B Farm II and San Francisco.

Race To Chicago Run backed

THE NEW Balance 25K Race To Chicago Run set for May 26 from The Fort inside Fort Bonifacio to the Rockwell Center in Makati got big support from corporate sponsors highlighting its value as a major sports event in the country. Among the major sponsors of the event which is being presented by Planet Sports and The Athlete's Foot, local distributors of New Balance shoes, are ING Life which is providing free accident insurance worth P50,000 for all the participants of the race covering a one-month period, Gatorade, Potencee, Marca Leon Cooking Oil, and the official radio station 89.1 Wave. Entry fees for out-of-town runners can be paid at any RCBC branch for details. Inquiries can be made at 7274806, 0917-8380589, and 0917-9862008.

CHAMP ANEW

Grandmaster Eugene Torre (extreme right) receives his trophy and check from (left to right) Andres Gatmaitan and Matias V. Defensor for winning the National Chess Championships. Watching are Jose Lustre and NCFP secretary general Samuel Estimo.

HAMBURG MASTERS

Sampras loses; Agassi quits

HAMBURG, Germany—The Hamburg Masters Series lost two of its biggest stars on the opening day when freshly crowned Italian Open champion Andre Agassi pulled out and 13-time Grand Slam champion Pete Sampras lost in the first round Monday.

MIRNYI

In a letter sent to Hamburg event organizers, Agassi said the Rome win had forced him to reconsider playing in Germany. His late withdrawal will cost him $40,000 in a fine.

Sampras, who dominated the game in the 1990s, appears unable to shake out of his slump. He hasn't won a title since Wimbledon 2000, which set the all-time record of 13 Grand Slam titles for the American.

He offered little resistance in a 6-3, 6-4 loss to Max Mirnyi. It was Sampras' second straight first-round loss on clay–he was defeated by Felix Mantilla in the opening round in Rome.

It was not a good omen before the French Open, the only Grand Slam played on clay and the only major to have eluded Sampras in his distinguished career. The $2.95 million Hamburg tournament, previously known as the German Open, is a major warmup for the French event, which starts in two weeks.

"I am trying to find my game," a dejected Sampras said. "I haven't found it. It's pretty frustrating."

Sampras lost to Mirnyi for the second straight time, after a defeat at the 2001 Stuttgart Masters Series. *AP*

Pierce, Kournikova win

ROME—Two former top-ten players making their way back from injuries won first-round matches Monday at the $1.22-million Italian Open. Two-time Grand Slam tournament champion Mary Pierce defeated Switzerland's Marie-Gaiane Mikaelian, 6-3, 5-7, 6-4, and Russia's Anna Kournikova dismissed Spain's Marta Marrero, 6-3, 6-3. *AP*

Mindanao tennister advances

MINDANAO bet Robert Einstein Ortelano defeated Juan Gabriel Pena, 6-0, 6-4, yesterday to advance in the second round of the boys' 12-under division in the Head Penn Metro Age Group Tennis Championships at the new Rizal Sports Club in Pasig City.

The victory sent Ortelano up against sixth seed Francis Alcantara, who drew first-round bye together with No. 1 Gerard Michael Ngo, No. 2 Patrick Arevalo, No. 3 Gerard Bergavera, No. 4 Mark Balce and No. 5 Joshua Tan Ho.

In other matches, Carlos Martin defeated Juan Fidel Regis, 6-0, 6-1; Raffy Delavin blasted jean Teodoro, 6-0, 6-0; Alberto Lorenzo Villamor outplayed Juan Allan Quintadcan, 6-0, 6-2, and John Angelo Medina demolished Joshua Galang, 6-0, 6-0. Also advancing were Benedict Marti Yanga, Joseph Abrot, Randy Delavin and Miguel Magat.

Iriga netters dominate field

NAGA—Franko Contreras edged Francis Tupaz, 6-4, 4-6, 6-3, to bag the boys' 12-under title and lead the domination of the Iriga netters at the close of the 2002 Milo Junior Tennis Cup and Regional Workshop here Sunday at the Naga Sports & Civic Center claycourts. Contreras, who also captured the recent Bicol Open age group hosted by Albay Gov. Al Francis Bichara, shared the limelight with teammates Jetro Bernales in the unisex 10-under class; Kevin Moran in the boys' 14-under category; and Ywijkev Dimabogte in the girls' 16-under event. On hand to award the Milo trophies were Kagawad Joe Grageda, Milo sports executive Jackby Jaime and club officers Efren Enverga, Acho Regala and Paul Gregory.

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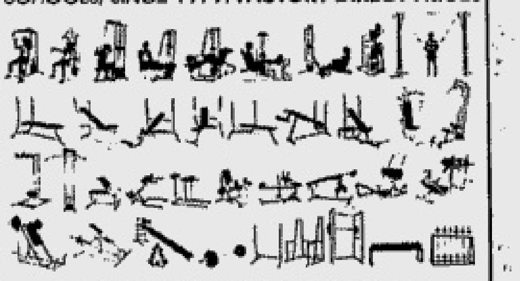

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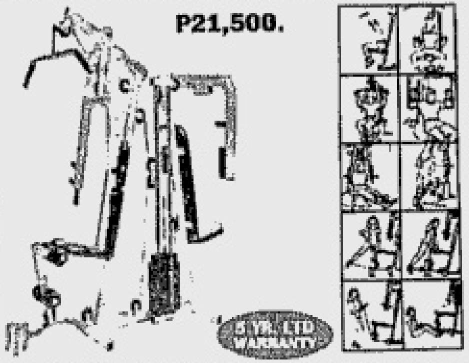

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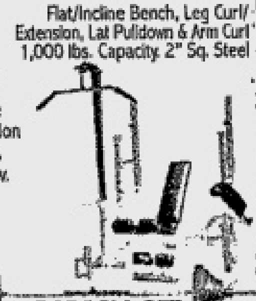

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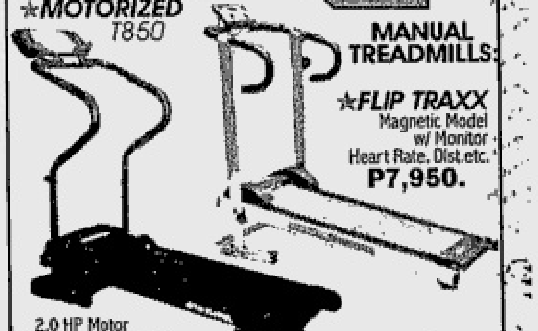

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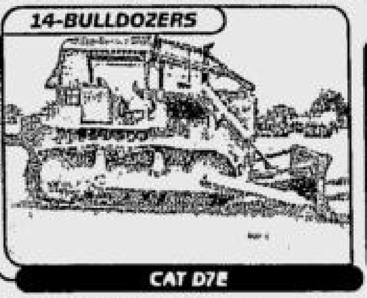
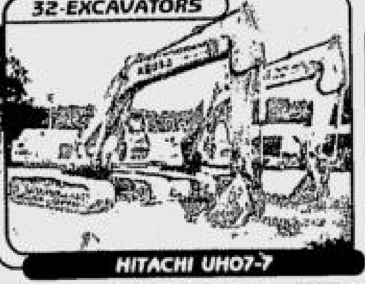


CAT D7E

32-EXCAVATORS



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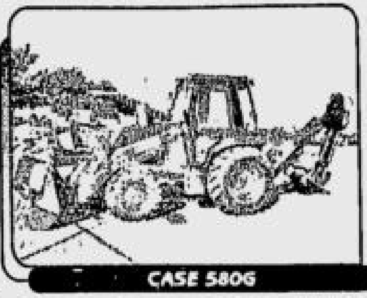


CASE 580G

9-TRUCK CRANES

P & H K3541 TC (35T)

80-DUMP TRUCKS

ISUZU DUMP TRUCK

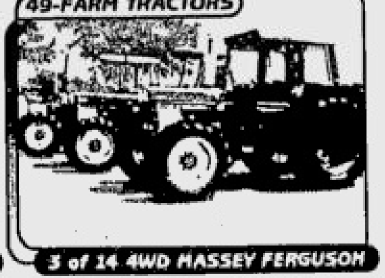
12-FIRE TRUCKS

HINO FIRE TRUCK (5KL)

80-REF VANS

KIA BONGO REF VAN

49-FARM TRACTORS



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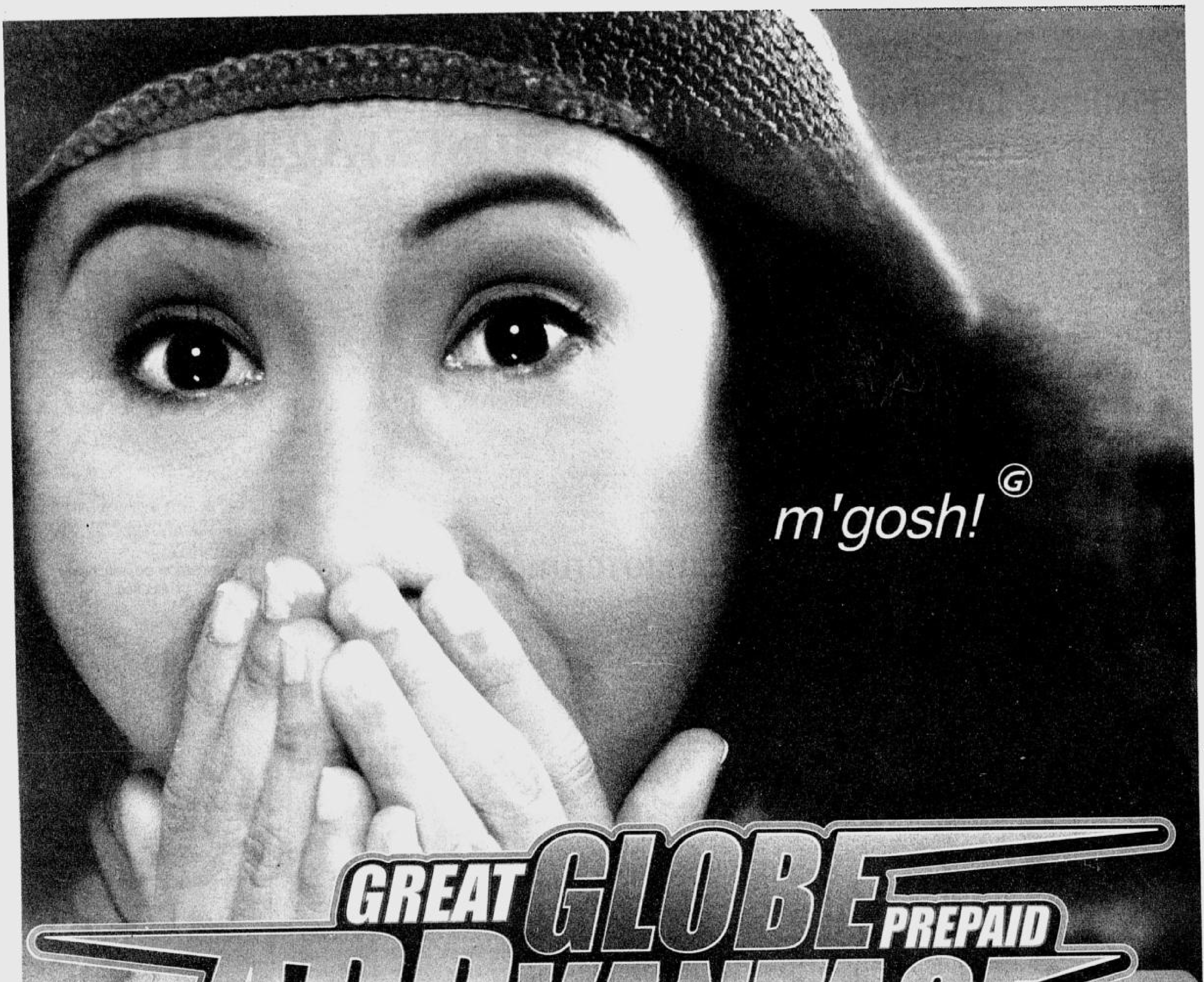

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METRO
Editor Louie C. Camino

UP residents set up barricades /A26

NBI seizes fake Honda motorcycles /A26

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GARBAGE CRISIS SOLUTION

Work with us, Greenpeace tells Abalos

By Christian V. Esguerra

THE ENVIRONMENTAL group Greenpeace Philippines has invited Metro Manila Development Authority Chair Benjamin Abalos Sr. to sit down with environmental groups to formulate long-term solutions to the worsening garbage crisis in the metropolis.

"If he's really serious about solving the garbage problem, he should work with us," Francis dela Cruz, Greenpeace toxic campaigner for Southeast Asia, said yesterday.

The invitation came a day after Abalos berated environmental groups for consistently criticizing his decisions on the garbage issue, particularly on the controversial Jancom contract.

Abalos said these groups should accept the "reality" that the government's waste recycling and segregation programs are not enough to process the tons of garbage in Metro Manila.

"It's true that recycling and segregation alone would not solve the problem," Dela Cruz said.

"But the MMDA should not concentrate on garbage firms since they're just out to make money. The more garbage we produce, the more money they create."

Greenpeace said the MMDA should instead come up with "front-end and forward-looking" solutions combining strategy, technology, education, and information.

A first step would be the creation of Ecological Solid Waste Management Boards for different areas in Metro Manila, according to Dela Cruz.

As the law mandates, these boards will be composed of the MMDA, the business sector, and non-governmental organizations tasked to formulate strategies on the garbage crisis, he said.

But Greenpeace lauded the MMDA's "Basura Baon sa Eskwela" program, which is aimed at encouraging students to bring to school recyclable materials in exchange for money.

Dela Cruz, however, noted that the program would not touch on the education component of a comprehensive waste management strategy.

He said Abalos should also tap other industries, particularly the food manufacturing sector, to do their part on the garbage problem.

Instead of negotiating a compromise on a 25-year contract with Jancom, the MMDA and the food industry should implement a 25-year program that would require the industry to recycle the packages it produces, Dela Cruz said.

International School ordered to suspend dismissal of employees

STRIKING employees of the International School Manila in Makati City yesterday scored a minor victory after the labor department ordered the school management to suspend the dismissal of 50 non-teaching personnel.

Labor Secretary Patricia Sto. Tomas gave the National Labor Relations Commission (NLRC) 45 days to resolve the dispute to avoid disrupting the school's operations.

But Sto. Tomas also ordered the protesting employees to stop their strike and return to work within 24 hours.

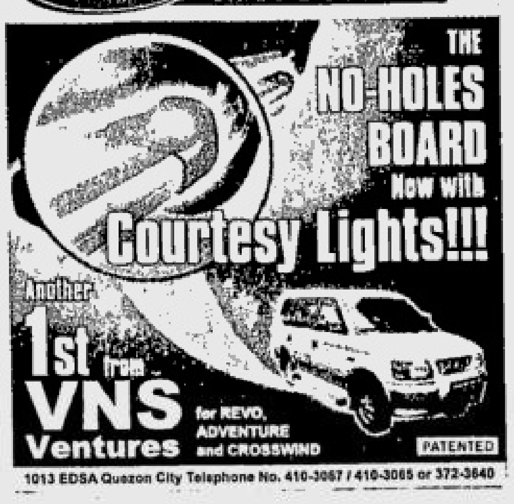
"The school is hereby directed to accept all returning workers under the same terms and conditions prevailing before the strike," Sto. Tomas said in her three-page notice of order.

"The school is directed not to carry into effect the intended termination of employment of members of the striking bargaining unit...until the validity of these actions are passed upon by the NLRC."

The employees responded with cheers when union counsel Paterno Menzon read the order at the school entrance on Salamanca Street yesterday afternoon.

Christian V. Esguerra

SURESTEP
STEPBOARDS



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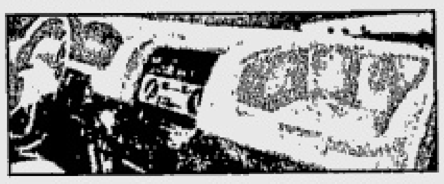

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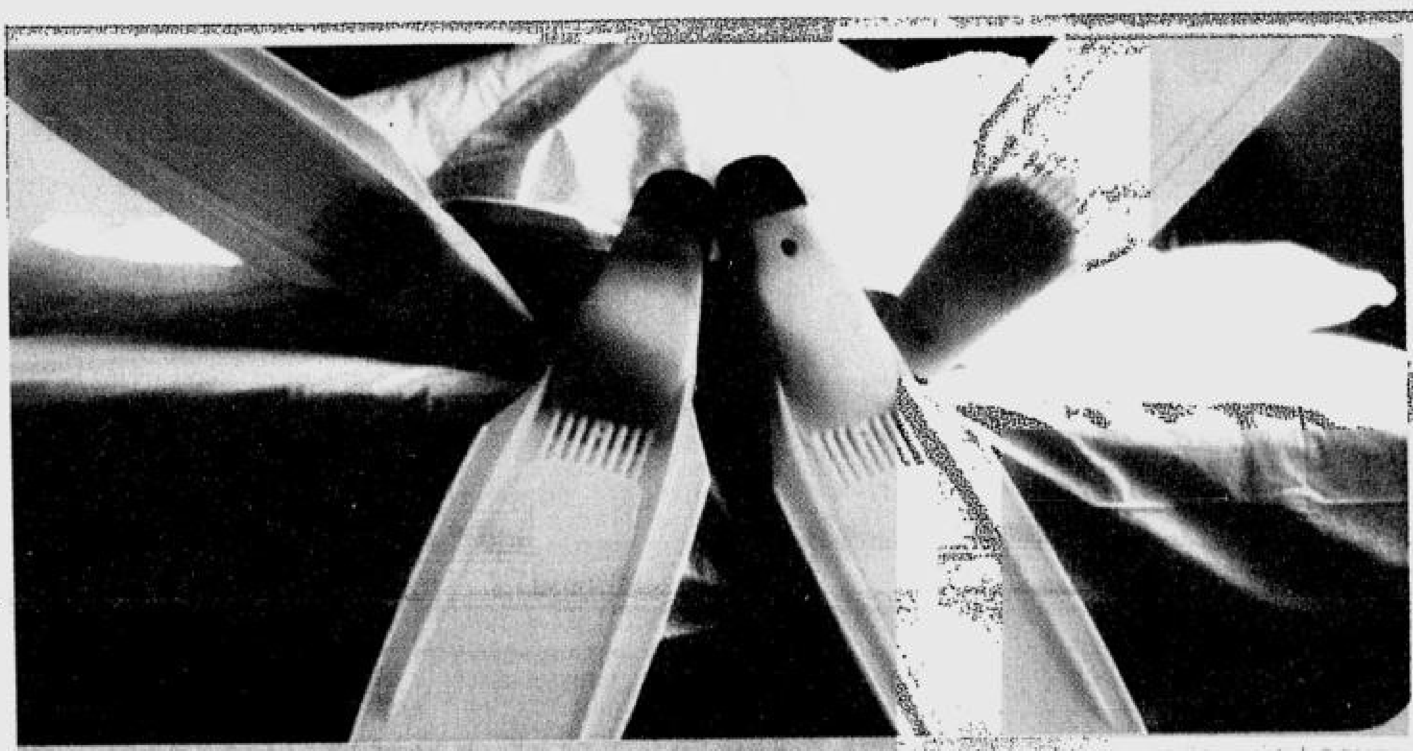

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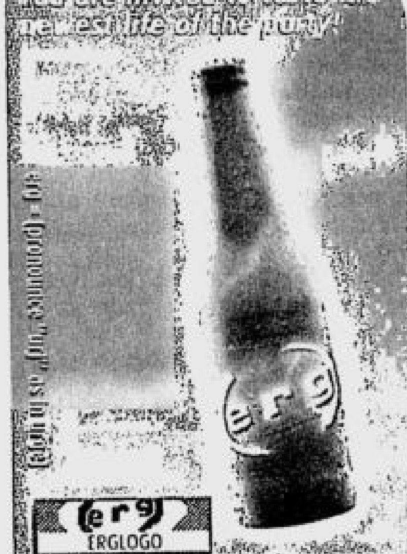

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9 LOGO THISSIDEUP
10 LOGO ZEP1

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LOGO FISH9
LOGO HOCKEY4
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LOGO KARATE3
LOGO NUMBER1
LOGO RECYCLE
LOGO SCORPION

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Boys	*Britney Spears*	**TONE BOYS**
Breaking Up Is Hard To Do	*The Partridge Family*	**TONE BREAKINGUP**
Build Me Up, Buttercup	*Sound Alike*	**TONE BUTTERCUP**
Can't Take My Eyes Of You	*Living Jazz*	**TONE CANTTAKE**
Come As You Are	*Nirvana*	**TONE COMEASUR**
Every Breath You Take	*Studio Musicians*	**TONE EVRYBREATH**
For Once In My Life	*Vonda Shepard*	**TONE 4ONCEIN**

Top ten ring tones:

1	Like A Rose	*A1*	**TONE LIKEAROSE**
2	Heaven By Your Side	*A1*	**TONE HEAVENBY**
3	Everytime	*A1*	**TONE EVERYTIME**
4	One More Try	*A1*	**TONE 1MORETRY**
5	Superman	*Five For Fighting*	**TONE SUPERMANS**
6	Macho Guwapito	*Rico Puno*	**TONE MACHO**
7	Batang Bata	*Apo Hiking Society*	**TONE BATANGBATA**
8	Katawan	*Hagibis*	**TONE KATAWAN**
9	Doo Bidoo	*Apo Hiking Society*	**TONE DOOBIDOO**
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CALTEX
What Drives You

UP residents set up barricades

By Agnes E. Donato

RESIDENTS OF Barangay San Vicente and University of the Philippines students yesterday barricaded the entrance to their community in Quezon City to prevent authorities from clearing up their possessions after a demolition left at least 35 families homeless on Monday morning.

Shanties were reduced to strips of plywood and roof sheets while appliances and other possessions of the residents are scattered in the area.

Arlynda Cabrera, 44, said she and her nine children had to sleep on cardboard sheets Monday night.

Cabrera's family was one of 16 affected families who were offered relocation at Erap City in Montalban, Rizal, but she refused to accept it.

"It's too far from our source of livelihood," she said tearfully. "Besides, we heard that there is no electricity and water service there."

Cabrera works as a housecleaner in UP Village, earning a meager P250 a day.

Residents also complained that members of the demolition team looted some of their things, including a television set and cash.

Boying Gaerlan, member of the barangay council, said he even saw some members of the demolition team gather the dismantled roof sheets from the rubble after the demolition.

He also hit UP officials for allegedly trying to justify the demolition by saying that Barangay San Vicente is a "danger zone" because of the presence of a creek dividing the two phases.

"We know it's just one of their silly excuses (to demolish the houses)," Gaerlan said.

Activist priest Fr. Robert Reyes visited the demolition site yesterday to give his support to the residents.

He said he was surprised to see the condition of the people there and claimed he was not informed of the decisions of the UP administration.

"If they have indeed formed an inter-agency meeting regarding the demolition of (houses in) San Vicente, then how come the Church was not consulted?" Reyes asked.

He said he is planning to organize a rally tomorrow to call the attention of UP President Francisco Nemenzo on the issue.

But Danilo Sumayod of the Quezon City Urban Poor Affairs Office maintained that UP and City Hall conducted consultations with the affected residents.

In a faxed statement, Sumayod said that "UP technically has the legal right both as an institution and a government entity to push through with the voluntary eviction."

UP Diliman Vice Chancellor for Community Affairs Gil Gotiangco reiterated that "a long process took place just to ensure that the settlers are aware of the development plans of the university."

He said UP initially did not plan for a demolition, "but a peaceful resolution (of the land dispute) through renovation, which (the settlers) consistently refused."

UPAO's Sumayod also claimed that "UP is in fact being generous in extending assistance in terms of relocation site and financial aid to the families, despite the fact that, as an academic institution, it is not covered by the provisions of the Urban and Housing Development Act of 1992." ***With Angeli A. Alagcan***

NBI seizes fake Honda motorcycles

AGENTS of the National Bureau of Investigation seized in Quezon City last week 36 motorcycles bearing fake Honda brands worth P1 million.

NBI officer-in-charge Fermin Nasol said the motorcycle units came from Jincheng-Mitsukoshi Motors Philippines located on E. Rodriguez Sr. Ave., QC.

Honda Philippines earlier complained to the NBI that Jincheng-Mitsukoshi has been importing and distributing motorcycles bearing Honda features.

Among the models allegedly imitated by Jincheng-Mitsukoshi were Honda's Wave 110S, Wave 125S and Dream Excess.

Agents of the intellectual property rights division confirmed that the firm was engaged in selling units whose features are similar to Honda's.

NBI agents secured a search warrant from Judge Antonio Eugenio of Manila Regional Trial Court Branch 24 before they raided Jincheng-Mitsukoshi on May 9.

The firms' owners are facing charges of violating provisions of the Intellectual Property Rights Law. ***Jerome Aning***

POLICE hold out one of the knives the suspects allegedly used on their victims. ERIK ARAZAS

Gay bar dancers turn to robbery

By Jerome Aning

TWO GAY bar dancers moonlighting as robbers, were arrested along with three other men for robbing passengers of an FX taxicab in Sampaloc, Manila before dawn yesterday, according to police.

Gerardo San Antonio, 19, and Juri Guani, 18, both dancers of the Dream Boy Gay Bar in Quezon City, were arrested along with Romeo Dumas, 21, of Sampaloc, Manila, Richard Dayrit, 19, and Eduardo Remitar, 21, both of Quezon City.

Police recovered from the five suspects the belongings of passengers Wilfredo Rosales, 43, of Sampaloc, and Mayor Tubama, 22, of Marikina City.

Police said the five men boarded the FX taxi at 2:30 a.m., on Quezon Boulevard.

As the vehicle descended Quezon Bridge in Quiapo, the suspects pulled out daggers, announced holdup and took the passengers' valuables.

The five then got down on Morayta and Lerma Streets in Sampaloc, not knowing that commuters have alerted policemen who were at the corner waiting for the suspects.

The suspects are now detained at Western Police District Station 4.

Why jeepney drivers are luckier than our boxers

BARE EYE

Recab Trinidad

THERE is one distinct similarity between a Pinoy professional boxer and the harassed jeepney driver.

What? I asked this straying pundit who had seen and smelled everything out in our chaotic streets.

Simple. They would not be doing what they're doing now if they had a choice.

So who would you say is the luckier of the two, the driver or boxer?

He chose the driver.

I protested.

I said that the driver, left to slug it out with assorted problems like killer pollution, kotong cops, and forever chained to the wheels, can't even dream of hitting the jackpot and winning a world crown one day.

Fine, my friend retorted, but the boxer could just end up dead, like what happened to that poor fellow in Tarlac last month.

* * *

I reconsidered. There reportedly are efforts to sweep the case of comebacking Meruel Sayas, who died after being knocked out by an overmatched national title contender in Tarlac, under the rug.

Jun Sarreal, president of the Philippine Boxing Federation (PBF), yesterday bared that the tragic Sayas case was being casually avoided by our sports officials.

They were not out to send anybody to jail, Sarreal remarked, but at least there must be efforts to introduce safeguards in professional boxing.

Sarreal repeated his previous claim, backed by details and statistics, that Sayas, after a long lay-off, should have not been paired against Alex Escaner, third-ranked Philippine super bantamweight contender.

How can we be sure there won't be a repeat of this tragic case? Sarreal asked.

He insisted that now is the time for right-thinking sports officials to make a move.

He said officials in charge of professional boxing here can't just sit down there, enjoy all the perks, like free travel, without doing anything for our poor fighters.

* * *

Anyway, one recommendation recently sent to Malacañang noted the urgent need to regulate the licensing of professional boxers here.

A simple study of local bouts, mostly those involving groping newcomers, would bare that the Games and Amusements Board has been issuing professional licenses to aspirants who don't have the sound, necessary boxing basics.

At least, in the case of professional vehicular drivers, they are first subjected to a series of tests to determine their competence to be on the road.

Not in professional boxing, where many able-bodied male desperate enough to earn a living inside the boxing ring are obviously issued a license.

Unlike the jeepney driver, who damages only his vehicle and those of others' in case of an accident, our ill-informed boxers regularly expose themselves to undue danger each time they fight with nothing more than eagerness and hunger to guide them.

* * *

There are even bigger problems.

Nothing could be more frustrating than the sight of old, shaky fighters who, after long, ignorant years inside the ring, retire without having acquired the proper basics of the sport.

Yes, we have seen old stuttering boxers who ignorantly enter the fight ring only to end up speaking like jumpy tele-type machines, their mouths often dripping.

Records show that boxing was introduced basically as a form of self-defense.

However, it has become clear that local boxers are often allowed to take out a license for as long as they appear capable of throwing a punch, no matter its savage direction and intent.

To repeat, there should be a body to determine if a boxer is able to properly defend himself before the poor fellow is issued a professional license.

Unlike the jeepney driver whose vehicle could undergo repairs after an accident, a boxer irrevocably damages himself, mainly his brain, each time he bangs it out ignorantly with an opponent.

Must as we like to, we can't put up repair shops for badly damaged hereabouts.

* * *

Unfortunately, it's mostly to each his own as far as raising, training and preparation of professional boxers here are concerned.

Boxers are not fighting cocks.

What's urgently needed here is a competent body which would do the screening of all boxers before these poor, hungry aspirants are allowed to take out a professional license.

That way, new boxers are at least assured they are able to properly defend themselves inside the ring.

This, of course, is easier said than done.

In order to come up with such a system, all boxing bodies must be informed and subsequently unified under a governing national agency.

Promoters, managers, trainers, referees, stable owners, matchmakers, must be required to form their respective bodies.

These bodies will not only undergo regular evaluation by a national governing body, they must also regularly be assessed of their duties and responsibilities.

As had been explained, President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo can/must create a boxing authority with the power to govern professional boxing in the Philippines.

It's a noble gesture. It would enhance our chances of winning more world titles and provide safety and dignity to the sport and its practitioners.

THE DAILY GOSPEL

Wednesday, May 15, 2002
7th Week of Easter

1st Reading: Acts 20:28-38
Gospel: Jn 17:11-19

Jesus looked up to heaven and prayed, "I am no longer in the world, but they are in the world whereas I am going to you. Holy Father, keep them in your Name (that you have given me,) so that they may be one, just as we are.

When I was with them, I kept them safe in your Name, and not one was lost except the one who was already lost, and in this the Scripture was fulfilled. But now I am coming to you and I leave these my words in the world that my joy may be complete in them.

I have given them your word and the world has hated them because they are not of the world; just as I am not of the world. I do not ask you to remove them from the world but to keep them from the evil one. They are not of the world, just as I am not of the world; consecrate them in the truth—your word is truth.

I have sent them into the world as you sent me into the world, and for their sake, I go to the sacrifice by which I am consecrated, so that they too may be consecrated in truth."

Commentary

By means of our journey through the Church's liturgical year, past and present come together. We too wait and pray for the coming of the Holy Spirit, that God may be present in our lives in greater power and freedom. Better still, Jesus prays for us, that we will live in God's presence and be one. Union always brings joy, as God must be present if there is true union, born of seeing and facing the truth together in love. Jesus' "consecration" which he speaks of here was a total dedication to speaking the truth in love, involving a decision not to draw back in the face of pain, rejection or hardship. The coming Spirit has more to do with this than with cozy emotions masquerading as Christian love, joy and peace.

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City not neglecting Baseco fire victims

By Jerome Aning

THE MANILA city government is trying to stem the measles epidemic that killed several children of about 500 families left homeless by the Easter Sunday fire at the Baseco Compound in Tondo, Manila, according to Lawyer Emmanuel Sison, secretary to Manila Mayor Lito Atienza.

Sison said the city government has not neglected these families who have taken refuge at a nearby warehouse and basketball court in the compound.

He claimed that only six children died in the evacuation center as a result of measles, and not eight babies as reported by the Urban Poor Associates.

Two other children who died were in Block 5 of Baseco compound, which had not been affected by the fire, Sison said.

He said the city had taken concrete steps to help these families, and that the city's health and social welfare departments have been servicing their needs a day after the fire.

"They have been working with agencies of the national government and volunteer groups under very difficult conditions," Sison said.

Health and social workers have been working with Baseco barangay Chair Tessie Lumactod in providing the needs of the 216 fire victims who are still at the evacuation centers.

UPA had reported that these families live in squalid conditions in the evacuation centers.

But Sison admitted that cramped conditions at the evacuation centers make the evacuees, especially the children, susceptible to disease.

"We have regularly conducted immunization against communicable diseases such as measles," he added.

He said there are toilets in the evacuation centers, and portable toilets placed in strategic areas.

Garbage is collected on a regular basis, and evacuees are constantly reminded to observe proper personal hygiene, he added.

SUPREME COURT DOCTRINES

LABOR LAW (TERMS AND CONDITIONS OF EMPLOYMENT)—Kinds of employment—Article 280 of the Labor Code provides for three kinds of employees: (1) regular employees or those who have been engaged to perform activities which are usually necessary or desirable in the usual business or trade of the employer; (2) project employees or those whose employment has been fixed for a specific project or undertaking, the completion or termination of which has been determined at the time of the engagement of the employee or where the work or service to be performed is seasonal in nature and the employment is for the duration of the season; and (3) casual employees or those who are neither regular nor project employees. The employees who are deemed regular are: (a) those who have been engaged to perform activities which are usually necessary or desirable in the usual trade or business of the employer; and (b) those casual employees who have rendered at least 1 year of service, whether such service is continuous or broken, with respect to the activity in which they are employed. As regular employees, private respondents are entitled to security of tenure. Thus, their services may be terminated only for a valid cause, with observance of due process. [Citations omitted.] [Justice Sandoval-Gutierrez, Perpetual Help Credit Cooperative, Inc. v. Faburada, G. R. No. 121948, October 8, 2001].

DIGEST BY R. B. VERA

Kidney patient needs lifeline

By Tarra Quismundo
Contributor

THE EYES of Sionita dela Cruz, 23, tell a sad story.

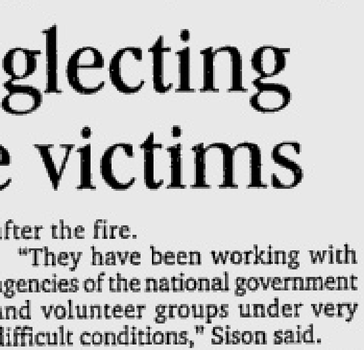
They do not lie about her suffering from chronic renal failure, an irreversible disease in which both her kidneys have lost all capacity to function.

The only way her condition can become is worse—unless she gets a kidney transplant as soon as possible.

De la Cruz's mother and sister have volunteered to donate their kidney to her, but the family can not afford the operation, which would cost at least P370,000, aside from the monthly expense on medication.

"This is a disease for the rich," said the husband of Dela Cruz, Eric, in Filipino. "We do not know anymore where we would get the money to pay for the expenses."

What keeps Dela Cruz alive is a twice a week hemodialysis session, to clean her blood of excess water and waste products.



DELA CRUZ

She and husband Eric take a nine-hour bus ride from Santiago City in Isabela to Manila and back for dialysis sessions at the Philippine Kidney Dialysis Foundation in Quezon City.

Before Dela Cruz was diagnosed with chronic renal failure in January of this year she was a typical young mother who had a big appetite.

"I used to weigh almost 75 kilos," she said.

She is now frail, and helpless against the disease. Both Dela Cruz and husband Eric, a tricycle driver, stopped working so she could go to her dialysis sessions. Dela cruz herself was a former assistant seamstress at a local tailoring shop.

They and their five-year-old Ericson live with Eric's parents and his siblings in a small house in Santiago City. There are 16 of them living in that house with less than the bare essentials.

The couple's son might not be able to enroll in school this coming school year.

Before Dela Cruz was diagnosed with the disease, the family income had been barely enough to support them.

"Now that both of us are out of work, we have nowhere else to get money," said Eric. "We have sought help from all of our relatives. We have also gone to several government agencies to ask for help," Sionita's husband said.

They have asked for help from the Philippine Charity Sweepstakes, the Department of Health, and the Department of Social Welfare and Development for help, but these agencies have limited funds.

Last January, Santiago City Mayor Pempe Miranda gave Dela Cruz P5,000, which she spent for her first dialysis session.

Dela Cruz had also gone to the office of Senator Juan Flavier, who gave her P2,000 twice.

She needs more donations from kind hearts for her weekly dialysis sessions, which cost about P5,000 to P6,000 a week. She also needs a huge amount of money to get a kidney transplant, now that she is at a crucial stage in her disease. She needs help—badly.

You can be her lifeline. Just contact her sister-in-law Evelyn dela Cruz, at 0917-942-7554, or Celine Madamba, Inquirer Corporate Relations Officer, at the Philippine Daily Inquirer Office, along Chino Roces Avenue, Makati City, or tel. no. 897-8808.

TWO FLORS. Nora Aunor and Helen Gamboa present the best actress winner.

PERSONAL TRIUMPH. Joel Torre shares his best actor win with wife Christy.

PHOTOS BY JOAN BONDOC

PAST AND PRESENT OF LOCAL SHOW BIZ? Rivals Rosanna Roces and Assunta de Rossi share the stage and the Best Actress award.

What went into this year's Urian best actress tie

By Alex Y. Vergara

THERE could only be one winner, but certain members of the Manunuri ng Pelikulang Pilipino who felt Rosanna "Osang" Roces also deserved to win reportedly insisted on a tie. In the end, they got their wish.

Although the country's foremost film critics are known for giving joint awards in the past, never had they agonized over such a dramatic verdict since they declared perennial arch rivals Vilma Santos and Nora Aunor Urian best actress winners in 1989.

This time they were again unable to break the tie between Osang and her rival to the "bold" throne Assunta de Rossi for best actress. Seasoned scriptwriter Armando Lao had earlier tied with filmmaker Lav Diaz for best screenplay.

Assunta was said to have slightly edged out Osang during the film critics' first deliberation, with a handful voting for Maricel Soriano. By the second deliberation, however, the two actresses were locked in a dead heat.

A *Manunuri* member cited Assunta for her "fresh and raw" performance in Joel Lamangan's "Hubog." Osang, however, drew certain members' attention—or was it sympathy?—for her on-target portrayal of an underworld character in Chito Roño's "La Vida Rosa."

A critic partial to Osang allegedly said such a challenging role might never come again given the actress' dimming career. To which a colleague was said to have replied: "Is that our concern? Even Lolita Rodriguez has yet to win an Urian."

Whatever the critics' reasons for such a hanging verdict, Osang and Assunta braved the extended proceedings—five long hours, would you believe?—with poise and equanimity.

Tall and tan Assunta looked smashing in a Grecian-inspired white halter by Frederick Peralta (***watch out for Lifestyle's fashion review on Sunday***).

To her credit, the younger, fresher Assunta proved to be such a gracious co-winner as she hugged Osang on the way to the stage. Alas, the latter seemed oblivious to such a gesture. Was it tension or a pure and simple case of conceit? Well, at least the tart-tongued Osang was just being consistent.

Speaking of good sport, Lorna Tolentino also proved to be one as she graced the event despite being snubbed by the *Manunuri*. Lorna had won a couple of acting awards earlier this year for playing an illiterate mother in "Abakada . . . Ina." For some reason, her performance didn't merit a nomination from the film critics.

Ditto for Fernando Poe Jr., the evening's Natatanging Gawad Urian awardee, who hasn't won even a single trophy from the *Manunuri*. FPJ not only came on time with wife Susan Roces, but also stayed on until the last award had been handed out. The royal couple of Philippine show biz was seated near Eddie Garcia, another early bird.

In contrast, front runners Osang and Assunta arrived several hours into the show. The latter was said to have rushed from a shooting in Nueva Ecija.

Real-life partners Richard Gomez and Lucy Torres also caused quite a stir as they entered the cavernous Araneta Coliseum a few minutes before airtime.

Mark Anthony Fernandez and Cogie Domingo also had their share of star-struck admirers.

Noranians expectedly shouted themselves hoarse as they shadowed their idol who accepted an award for "Himala." The Ishmael Bernal opus was among 10 best films during the past three decades cited by the *Manunuri*. The Superstar later paraded on stage with other past Urian winners such as Lorna, Eddie, Gloria Romero, Perla Bautista, Elizabeth Oropesa, Amy Austria, among others.

Vilma, whose memorable films were not cited on the 10 best list, was a no-show. The Star for all Seasons had reportedly begged off since she was busy filming Roño's "Dekada 70," her long-delayed film based on a book by Lualhati Bautista. With no Vilmanians to "outshout" them, the rowdy Noranians had to contend with their echoes.

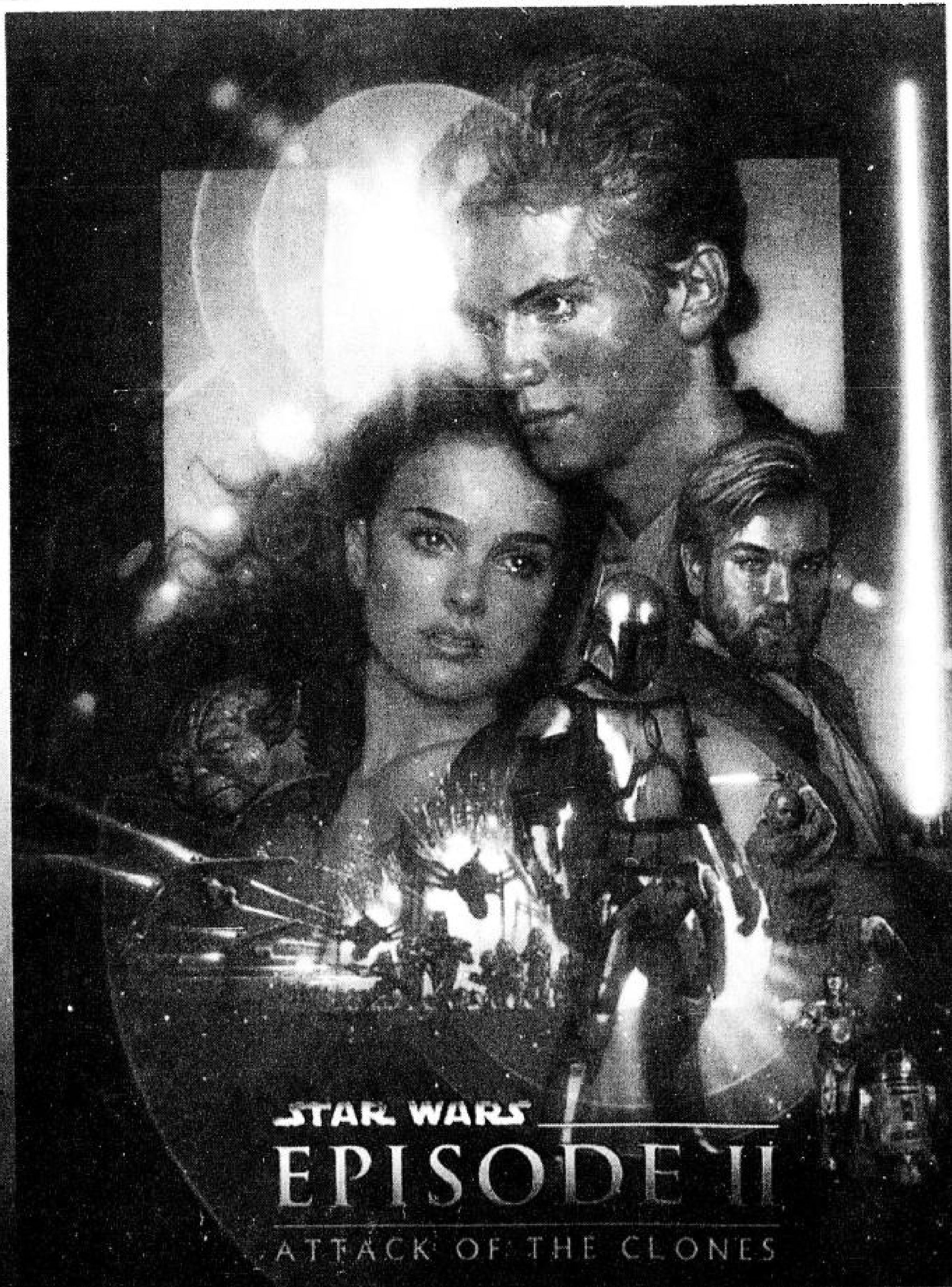
It was the first time that such a glittering event was held at the Big Dome. The *Manunuri* normally starts the awards season, but the group had a falling out with Airtime Marketing, its former producer, for having allegedly prioritized other award-giving bodies.

The pressure of coming out with an exceptional show that would mark the group's 25th year and cap off the awards season fell on Tony Tuviera's APT Entertainment Inc.

And APT delivered, with some guidance from the *Manunuri*, coming up with, among others, a show-stopping opening number that paid tribute to various film genres—complete with rappelling stuntmen, acrobats, pyrotechnics and digitally enhanced film clips featuring comedian-singer Janno Gibbs.

Thankfully, the program didn't need scripts scribbled hastily on manila paper since a high-tech giant teleprompter behind the ringside helped emcee Edu Manzano and the evening's presenters follow their lines.

The program would have been perfect had not for the long gaps and a joint acting award.



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Sharon's new album a hit in Hong Kong

SHOWBIZ TIDBITS

Leah Salterio

THE SUCCESS of **Sharon Cuneta**'s newest CD, "All I Ever Want," under BMG Records, proves how extensive the megastar's fan base is.

The CD was released in Hong Kong last week and within a few days, it landed on the Top 23 of HMV music store's Top 30 sales charts, followed by the likes of Westlife ("World of Our Own") and **Enrique Iglesias** ("Escape").

Leading the list are the new albums of **Sade** ("Lovers Live"), **Shakira** ("Laundry Service") and **Sheryl Crowe** ("C'mon, C'mon").

Sharon cried after learning about the good news when she went to Hong Kong last Friday for a concert and album promo blitz.

"I can't believe it," Sharon told us through text. "I've been thanking God because He has been so good to me."

It has been Sharon's long-time dream to penetrate the international music market. With the success of her album in Hong Kong, she has conquered a part of Asia. The rest of the world is definitely not far behind.

Sharon also did a concert at the 12,000-seater Hong Kong Coliseum, which was filled to its capacity. The show was produced by Forex.

In the audience were Sharon's hubby, Sen. **Francis "Kiko" Pangilinan**, her daughter **KC, Raymart Santiago, Agot Isidro** and husband **Manu Sandejas**.

Musical director was **Mel Villena**. Sharon's guest was comedian **John Lapuz**.

We were told it was the first time in the history of Hong Kong Coliseum that the area behind the stage was also filled. Sharon's stage had no backdrop to accommodate more fans who wanted to watch the show.

BMG Records artist and repertoire manager **Vic Valenciano** who was with the megastar in the Hong Kong trip, said Sharon's album has now reached the gold record mark in Hong Kong, with 10,000 copies sold. And the album continues to sell.

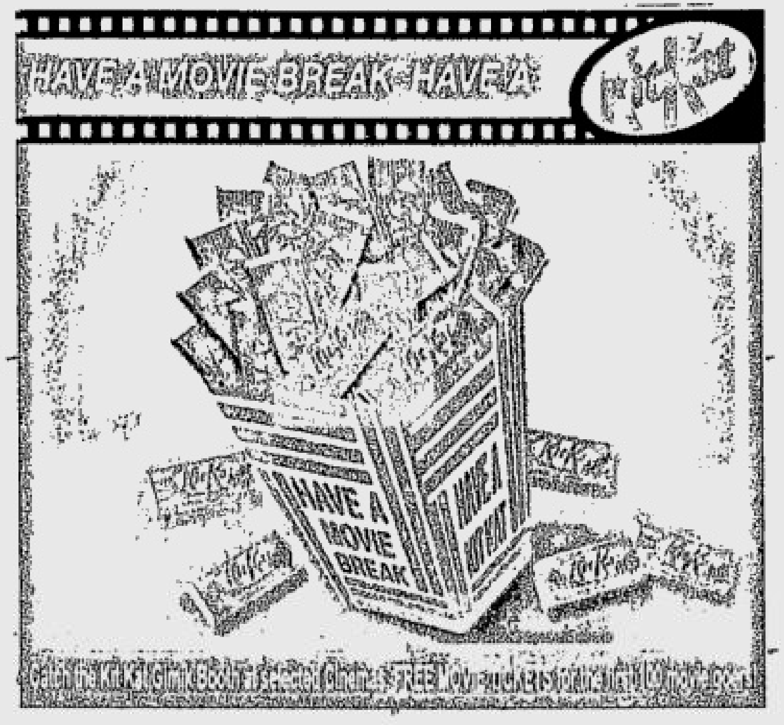
"All I Ever Want" contains the cut "In Your Eyes," Sharon's duet with Hong Kong music superstar **Andy Lau**. The song was penned by noted pianist-composer **Jim Brickman**, another BMG Records artist who recently did a two-night concert in Manila with Sharon.

Reader writes

FROM **Liza Atienza** who reacts on our column about **Piolo Pascual** (Showbiz Tidbits —05/08/2002), who will soon star with **Joyce Jimenez** in Regal Films' upcoming offering, "If I'm Not in Love."

"Piolo is better and bigger than **Aga Muhlach** and **Richard Gomez**, because Piolo is a good singer (unlike Aga and Richard) and a regular guest in the concerts of **Pops Fernandez**. That makes Piolo not only a concert performer but also a singer and host of 'Asap' at the same time. He's definitely a great actor, no doubt about that and his nominations for acting awards were plenty but soon trophy will come his way.

"Good luck Piolo! God bless! But who's the lucky girl in your life?"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Logo / Ringtone / Group Graphics / Picture Message / Screen Saver List of Keywords	LOGO AK / TONE AK / GROUP AK / PIC AK / SAVER AK
Logo* / Ringtone* / Group Graphics*/ Picture Message* / Screen Saver*	LOGO / TONE / GROUP / PIC / SAVER <keyword>
To send a Logo / Ringtone / Group Graphics / Picture Message / Screen Saver to a friend	LOGO / TONE / GROUP / PIC / SAVER <keyword> <cell number>
To join promo and know mechanics & prizes	WIN AK
To invite your friend to join The Movie Club	INVITE <your friend's cellone no.>
To check how many download / Trivia / Sine raffle tickets you have	RAFFLE AKDL / AKTRIVIA / AKSINE

*Available on selected handsets • To receive more information on the commands, key in HELP and send to 239

Available Ringtones:

TONE akalamo1 • TONE akalamo2

Mechanics

1. From May 11 up to midnight of May 16, 2002, all Talk 'N Text members who answers the Trivia Quiz correctly or successfully downloads a logo, group graphic icon, screen saver, picture message or ringtone gets one (1) electronically-generated trivia or download raffle ticket.
2. From May 11 up to 12 noon of May 27, 2002, all members who complete a successful transaction for the SineStorya Game will receive one (1) electronically-generated sine raffle ticket.
3. The top ten (10) subscribers with the most number of download raffle tickets will meet and dine with the stars of the movie.
4. The top thirty (30) subscribers with the most trivia raffle tickets each win a movie pass good for two (2) for the exclusive advance screening at Viva's Screening Room, 6th flr., 334 E. Rodriguez Sr. St.,New Manila, Quezon City, 6 PM on May 19, 2002.
5. The top fifty (50) subscribers with the most sine raffle tickets each win a movie pass good for two (2) to the regular showing of the movie.
6. Winners shall be notified thru a voice call to their registered cellone number and must present their active Talk 'N Text cellone with the winning SIM number and valid IDs with photo to claim their prizes.
7. Promo is for GMA only.

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VIVA

Games

SINESTORYA
Ang kwento ng sine, pwede mo nang i-download sa Talk 'N Text cellone mo. Puwede mo pang piliin how you want the story to end. Just key in SINE AK and send to 239.

TRIVIA QUIZ
Find out how well you know the movie. Sagutin ang questions about the movie by keying in PLAY AKTRIVIA, then send to 239.

Download requests will be charged as follows:
Help and other regular commands – P2.50;
Logos, ringtones, picture messages, group graphics, and screen savers – P12.00;
Games – P2.50
See flyers for details

Regular showing starts May 22, 2002

PER DTI-NCR PERMIT NO. 0613, SERIES OF 2002

Advance screening for 'Episode II'

"STAR Wars" fans are up for a double treat when Araneta Center hosts an advance screening of the much-anticipated second prequel of "Star Wars."

Be one of the first to feel the Force when you catch the advance screening of "Star Wars Episode II: Attack of the Clones," at midnight tonight at Alimall's Cinema.

The CD soundtrack of "Star Wars Episode II: Attack of the Clones" will also be available at the Ali 3 lobby on a special discount sale for tonight only.

For reservations, call Ticketnet at 911-5555.

Aiza live at Suburbia

THIS May, Suburbia not only has the biggest bands in the country performing every week but also has multi-platinum hitmaker Aiza Seguerra performing in a special one-night concert, "Aiza Live at Suburbia," 10:30 tonight.

Seasoned TV director Bert de Leon or *Direk* Bert, as he is fondly called, is conceptualizing and directing the show.

It was *Direk Bert* and "Eat Bulaga" host Vic Sotto who taught Aiza her first guitar lesson.

Joining Aiza at the Suburbia show are some of the country's best session musicians such as Bobby Taylo on bass, Roy Mercado on drums and musical director Ric Mercado on acoustic lead guitar.

Some of the country's biggest bands also perform at Suburbia every week.

Side A takes center stage on Mondays with back-to-back shows with Escape on Wednesdays.

South Border performs back-to-back with M Power on Tuesdays while Thursdays are absolute retro nights with the music of Q&A.

Fridays are with Mulatto and 7th Soul, while Pido with Take One performs with Freeverse on May 18 and 25.

For tickets to "Aiza Live At Suburbia," call 450-1685 or 86.

THEATER MOVIE GUIDE

ARANETA CENTER THEATERS 911-3101	
ALI MALL CINEPLEX-1	VIDEOKE KING
ALI MALL CINEPLEX-2	7 DAYS TO LIVE
ALI MALL CINEPLEX-3 (DDS)	JASON X
ALI MALL CINEPLEX-4 (SDDS)	SPIDERMAN
ALI MALL CINEPLEX-5 (DTS)	SPIDERMAN
ALI MALL CINEPLEX-6 (DOLBY)	HARDBALL
ALI MALL CINEPLEX-7(DOLBY)	K-PAX
FARMERS PLAZA-1(DOLBY)	KAPIRASONG GUBAT . . .
FARMERS PLAZA-2(DOLBY)	SPIDERMAN
FIESTA CARNIVAL	
NEW FRONTIER	
MANILA	
EASTERN	
MAXIM	CLOSED
MIRAMAR	EVA / JOYRIDE
ODEON	JASON-X
ODEON-2	FRUIT IS SWELLING
ROBEN	SANA TOTOO NA
TANDEM-1	ITLOG
TANDEM-2	IKA-7 GLORYA
TIMES	FROM HELL / D 'TOX
QUEZON CITY	
ACT-1	SENSUAL ISLAND
ACT-2	KAYA KO PERO MASAKIT
ACT-3	CLOSED
ACT-4	CLOSED
CORONET-2	ORIGINAL SIN
QUEZON-1	SANA TOTOO NA
REMAR	BUKANG BIBIG
REMAR-2	SANA TOTOO NA
NOVA MALL - NOVALICHES CINEMA	
A	SANA TOTOO NA
B	KAPIRASONG GUBAT . . .
C	
MANDALUYONG CITY	
SHANGRI-LA PLAZA MALL	635-20-79 / 633-78-51 TO 70
CINEMA-1	K-PAX
CINEMA-2	SPIDERMAN
CAINTA RIZAL	
STA. LUCIA EAST	(681-5401 TO 19)
CINEMA-1	I AM SAM
CINEMA-2	BUKANG BIBIG
CINEMA-3	VIDEOKE KING
CINEMA-4 (DOLBY DIGITAL)	7 DAYS TO LIVE
CINEMA-5 (DTS)	HARDBALL
CINEMA-6	BENEATH LOCHNESS
CINEMA-7	KAPIRASONG GUBAT . . .
CINEMA-8	SCORPION KING
CINEMA-9 (DTS)	SPIDERMAN
CINEMA-10 (DOLBY DIGITAL)	SPIDERMAN
CINEMA-11(SDDS)	SPIDERMAN
CINEMA-12	K-PAX
CINEMA-14	JASON X
CINEMA-15	VIDEOKE KING
LORES	
CINEMA-2	CLOSED
CINEMA-3	CLOSED
POWER PLANT CINEMA	
CINEMA-1	K-PAX
CINEMA-2	SPIDERMAN
CINEMA-3	HARDBALL
CINEMA-4	SPIDERMAN
CINEMA-5	JASON X
CINEMA-6	SPIDERMAN
UNIWIDE METROMALL	
(LAS PINAS)	
CINEMA-1	
CINEMA-2	
CINEMA-4	
UNIWIDE COASTAL MALL	
(PARANAQUE)	
CINEMA-1	ALIPIN NG TUKSO
CINEMA-2	THE OTHER SIDE OF LOVE
CINEMA-4	ALAMID

OPENS TOMORROW MAY 16 !
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STAR WARS
EPISODE II
ATTACK OF THE CLONES
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IAN McDIARMID SAMUEL L. JACKSON CHRISTOPHER LEE
ANTHONY DANIELS KENNY BAKER FRANK OZ
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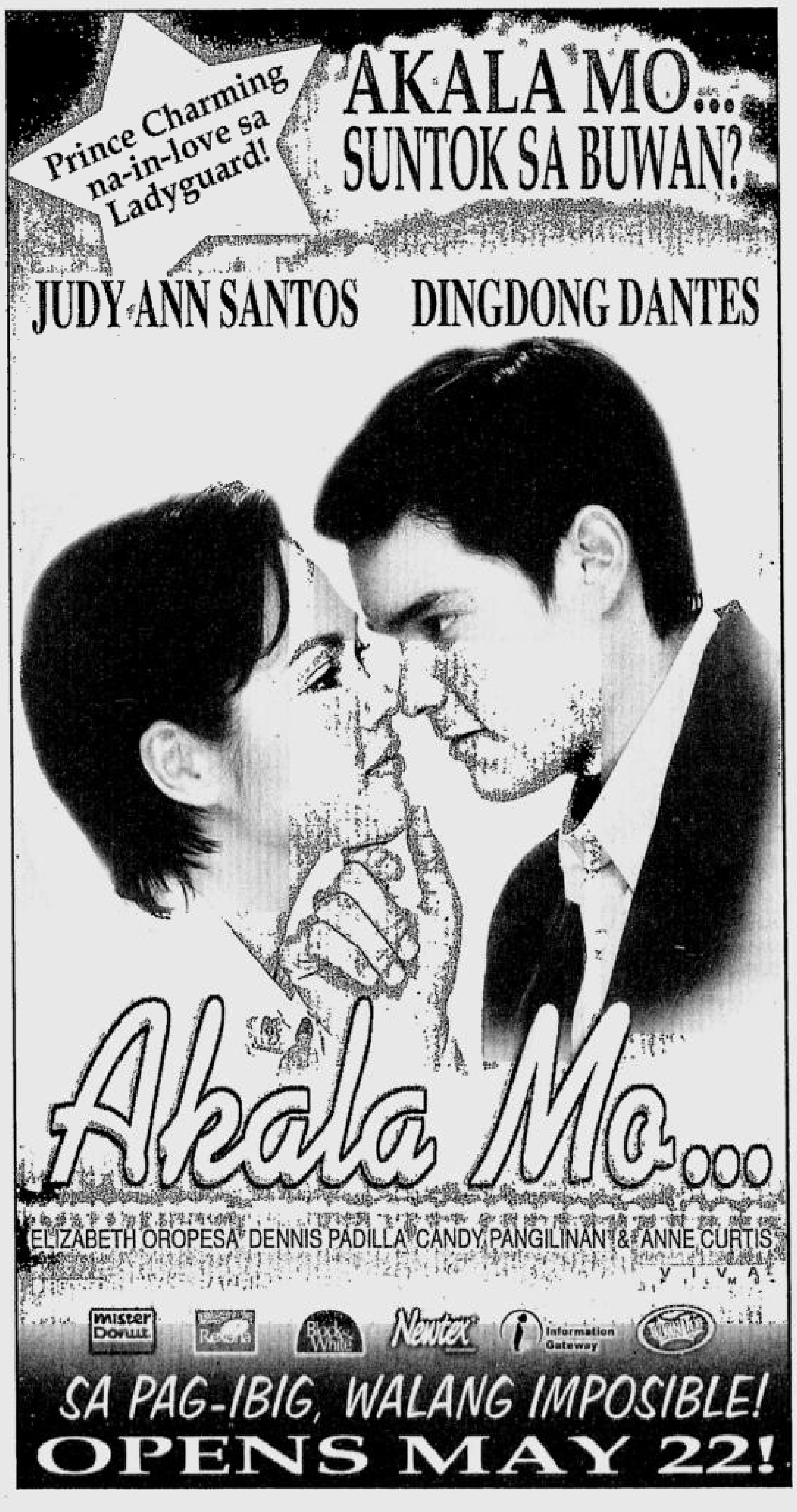
Prince Charming na-in-love sa Ladyguard!
AKALA MO... SUNTOK SA BUWAN?
JUDY ANN SANTOS
DINGDONG DANTES
Akala Mo...
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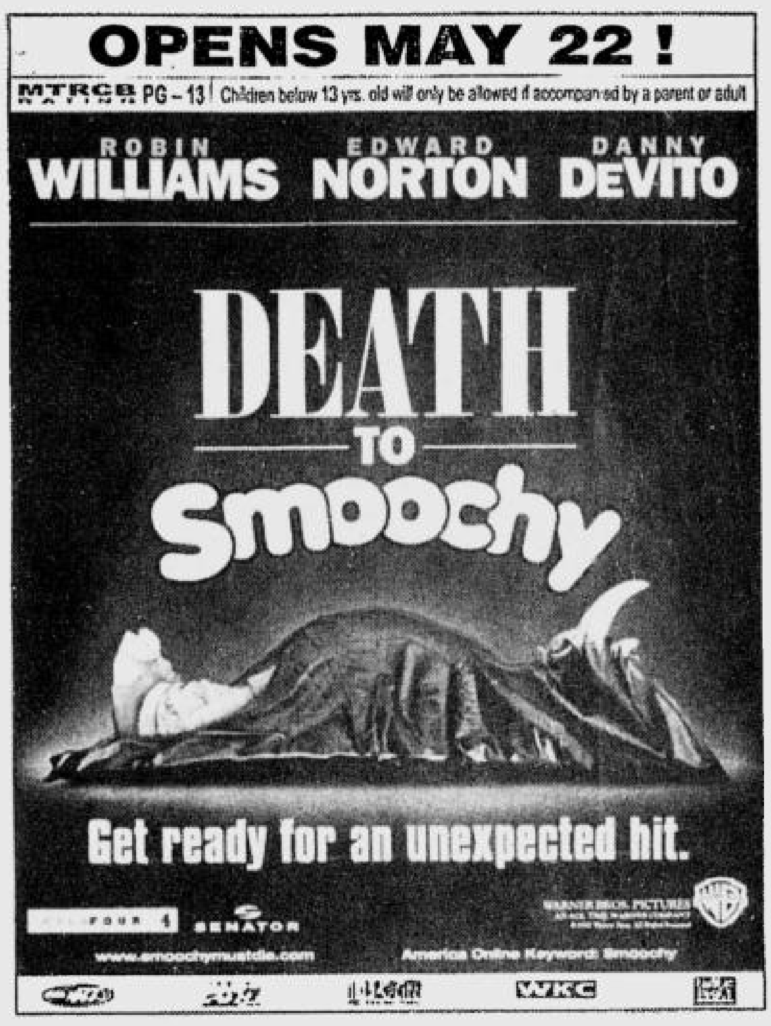
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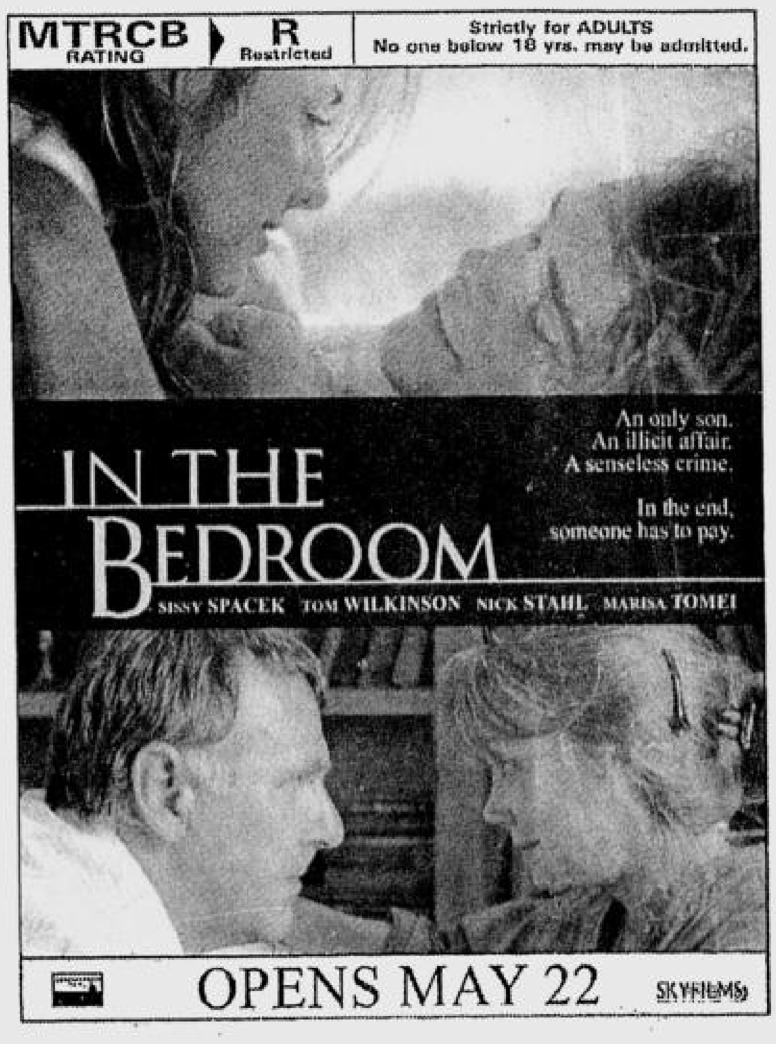
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An illicit affair.
A senseless crime.
In the end, someone has to pay.
IN THE BEDROOM
SISSY SPACEK TOM WILKINSON NICK STAHL MARISA TOMEI
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Editor Louie C. Camino

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SPIDERMAN - GP 12:40, 3:20, 6:00, 8:40	JASON X - P13 1:30, 3:30, 5:30, 7:30, 9:30	SPIDERMAN - GP 2:00, 4:40, 7:20, 10:00

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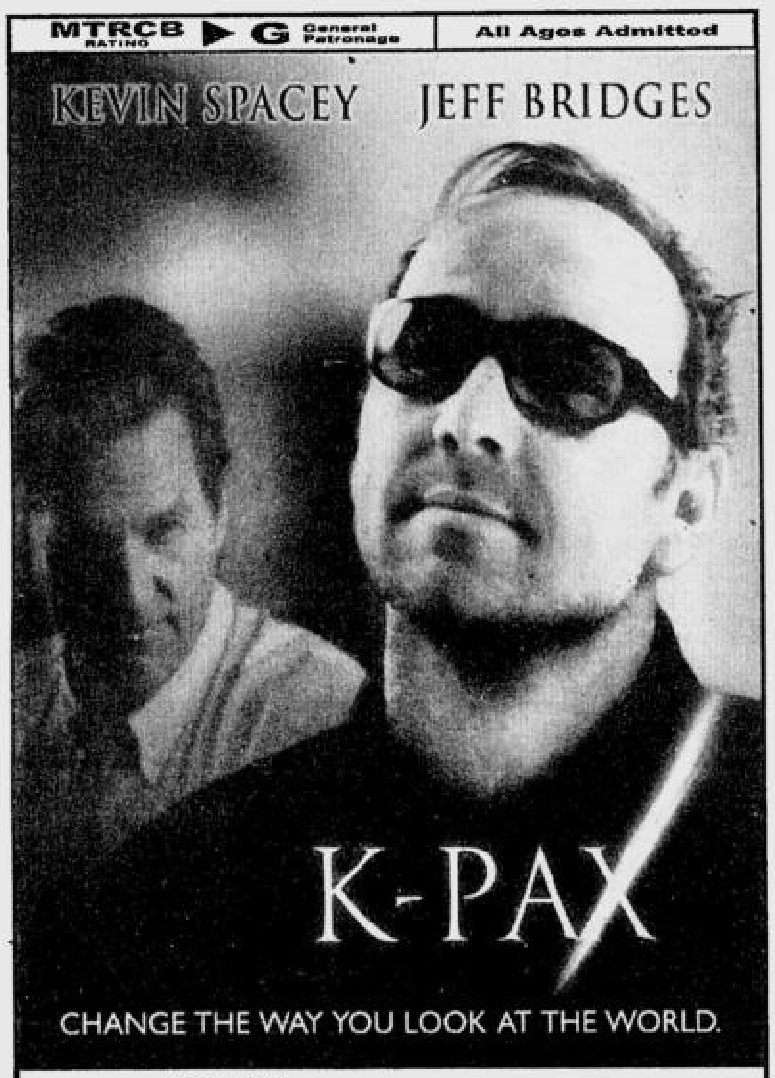
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Three new films

VIEWFINDER

Nestor U. Torre

SOME interesting movies are about to open in town. Most interesting in our view is "Death to Smoochy," a black satire in which **Robin Williams** plays a rich and famous star of children's television named Randolph Smiley.

For years, Smiley has enjoyed all of the perks of TV stardom—and then some. As the star of the highest-rated kiddie show on the tube, he's loved by millions.

Unknown to his adoring public, however, Smiley is a drunk and isn't averse to receiving bribes from parents and want their kids to appear on his show.

But the truth will out, so the time comes when Smiley's goose is cooked, and the young viewers who worshipped him suddenly see that their idol has feet of sullen clay, and turn against him.

Smiley is replaced by Sheldon Mopes (**Edward Norton**) and his alter-ego "Smoochy," a fuschia-colored rhinoceros. Young viewers take to him instantly, driving the rejected Smiley up the wall. He decides to violently avenge himself on his replacement.

Thus does the movie show that the kiddie TV syndrome is not all sweetness and light, and is in fact sometimes a snakepit where only the truly evil survive.

We look forward to seeing Williams and Norton acting together, and **Danny De Vito** is also around both as actor *and* director.

Meanwhile, "Panic Room" stars **Jodie Foster** as a single mother who moves into a house that turns out to have a "panic room," a secret, impregnable place where the house's owners can barricade themselves against robbers and other people who want to do them harm.

The single mother and her 11-year-old daughter get to use the panic room when three men break into the house, initiating a deadly psychological game with potentially fatal consequences.

The twist in the movie's plot is the discovery that what the intruders are after is in the panic room itself.

Foster play the role originally intended for **Nicole Kidman**, who had to bow out of the project due to a knee injury. But Foster doesn't mind being a replacement actress because she's always wanted to work with the movie's director, **David Fincher**, whose directorial touch she's admired ever since she saw one of his early movies, "Seven."

Finally, "40 Days and 40 Nights" topbills **Josh Hartnett** as a young man who decides to give up sex for Lent. The project is interesting not just for its unusual plot premise, but also because it's Hartnett's first comedy. The new leading man has done mostly dramatic films or action-dramas, so going sexy was a major stretch for him.

But Hartnett was grateful for the opportunity to explore his comic side. His next few films after this one require him to go back to his signature dramatic mode, but he continues to be on the lookout for another comic romp to star in.

Actors wanted

BULWAGANG Gantimpala is holding auditions for its 25th season of plays, "Kanser (Noli Me Tangere)," "El Fili," "Florante at Laura" and "Ibong Adarna," from 6 to 9 p.m. on May 17 and 18, at the Gantimpala Theater Studio, No. 8005-F Tanguile corner Kamagong, San Antonio Village, Makati City (895-8314).

Wanted are male and female actors 15 to 25 years old, with experience in acting, dancing and singing.

MTV nomination

REGINE Velasquez, who was named Favorite Artist Philippines at the MTV Asia Awards last February, has garnered two nominations in this year's MTV Video Awards Pilipinas, for the love song, "To Reach You" from her latest album, "Reigne."

The music video of the song directed by **Louie Ocampo** is nominated for Best Female Video and the song composed by **Lisa Dy** and **Chat Zamora** is a nominee for Best Song.

Other nominees: "Loving" by **Gabby Eigenmann** for Best New Artist and Best Male Video. "Love Hurts" by **Jaya** for Best Female Video. "Umaaraw Umuulan" by Rivermaya for Best Group Video and Best Song. And "Say A Little Prayer" by **Janno Gibbs** (featuring **Pops Fernandez**) for Best Male Video.

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JOHN ARCILLA
ALLEN DIZON
PYAR MIRASOL
TONTON GUTIERREZ
and
GLYDEL MERCADO
Sana Totoo Na
BERTING LABRA
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Arkdia foam party

ARKDIA Entertainment Venue presents Summer's e!nd—a foam party and bikini open competition tonight.

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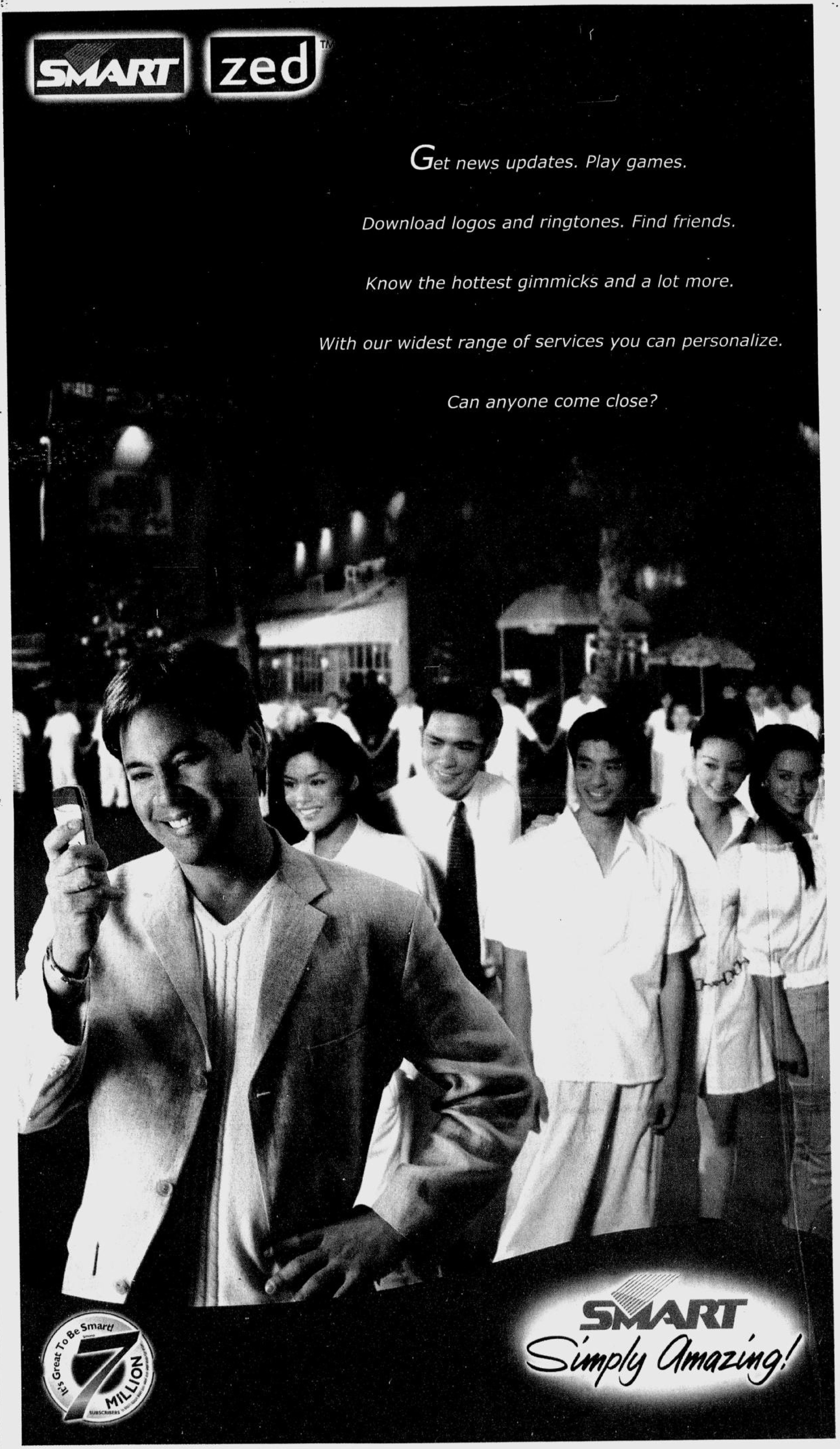
Come to the party in your sassiest and sexiest white summer outfit and party with live band entertainment provided by Sabor Latino and Elements.

For the more daring female souls, the bikini open is just the activity for you. Get wild, wet and insanely sexy in an alluring production number that will showcase bods to die for.

The winner will enjoy a three-day/two-night vacation package for 2 courtesy of Air Philippines and Club Panoly Beach Resort in Boracay.

For details, call 400-9974.



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US pension fund to keep RP investments

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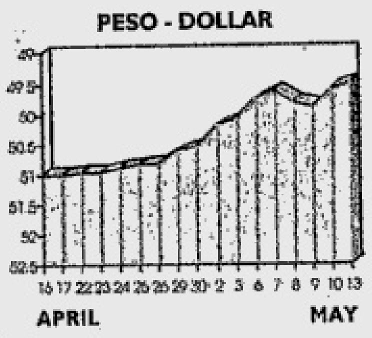

GRAPHS BY ROBERT ANDRES

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¥ 128.32 = $1

As of 5 p.m., May 14, 2002

GOLD: $309.80/310.30

per ounce Hong Kong, May 14, 2002

STOCK MARKET

Stocks down

STOCKS dropped yesterday despite US pension fund Calpers' decision to maintain its stock investments in the country as concerns over a high first quarter budget deficit dampened sentiment, analysts said.

STOCKS/ B5

By Clarissa S. Batino

CALPERS, America's biggest pension fund, has decided to keep its investments in the Philippine stock market.

The decision was made by the board of directors of CalPERS, or the California Public Employees Retirement System Fund, the other day.

Government officials were pleased with the news and said the decision of the CalPERS board affirmed the increasing investor confidence in the Philippines.

The move not only meant that millions of dollars in CalPERS' investments in the country would be intact but also that of other foreign fund managers who take their cue from large pension funds.

"This is not just a business decision of a large investor but an affirmation that the country's economic plan is on track and we are making progress in rebuilding the economy," said Finance Secretary Jose Isidro Camacho.

The finance secretary just arrived from the United States where he met with CalPERS officials to convince them to reconsider an earlier decision to pull out of some developing Asian countries.

CalPERS had announced in February that it was pulling out its funds from the Philippines as well as in Malaysia, Indonesia, and Thailand. So far, only the Philippines had gotten a favorable reversal from the pension fund.

The CalPERS' decision, according to Bangko Sentral Governor Rafael Buenaventura, confirmed that the economy's fundamentals were intact and recovery was in progress.

CalPERS' move came months after the two biggest foreign credit-rating agencies had upgraded their outlook for the Philippine economy from negative to stable. Moody's Investors Service had reversed its negative outlook to stable in February while S&P followed suit in April.

"Their investment in the Philippines is the first to be reinstated and this speaks well of our achievements. We hope other foreign investors would be guided by CalPERS," Buenaventura said.

The US pension fund said it had investments of $1 billion in the emerging markets. Of the total, the Philippines has a share of no more than $15.7 million of the CalPERS fund invested mostly in the equities market.

Buenaventura said the amount of CalPERS' investments in the country was not really the issue. "It is the signal that the pension fund, because of its size, gives to other investors who look to CalPERS for leadership," said the central bank chief.

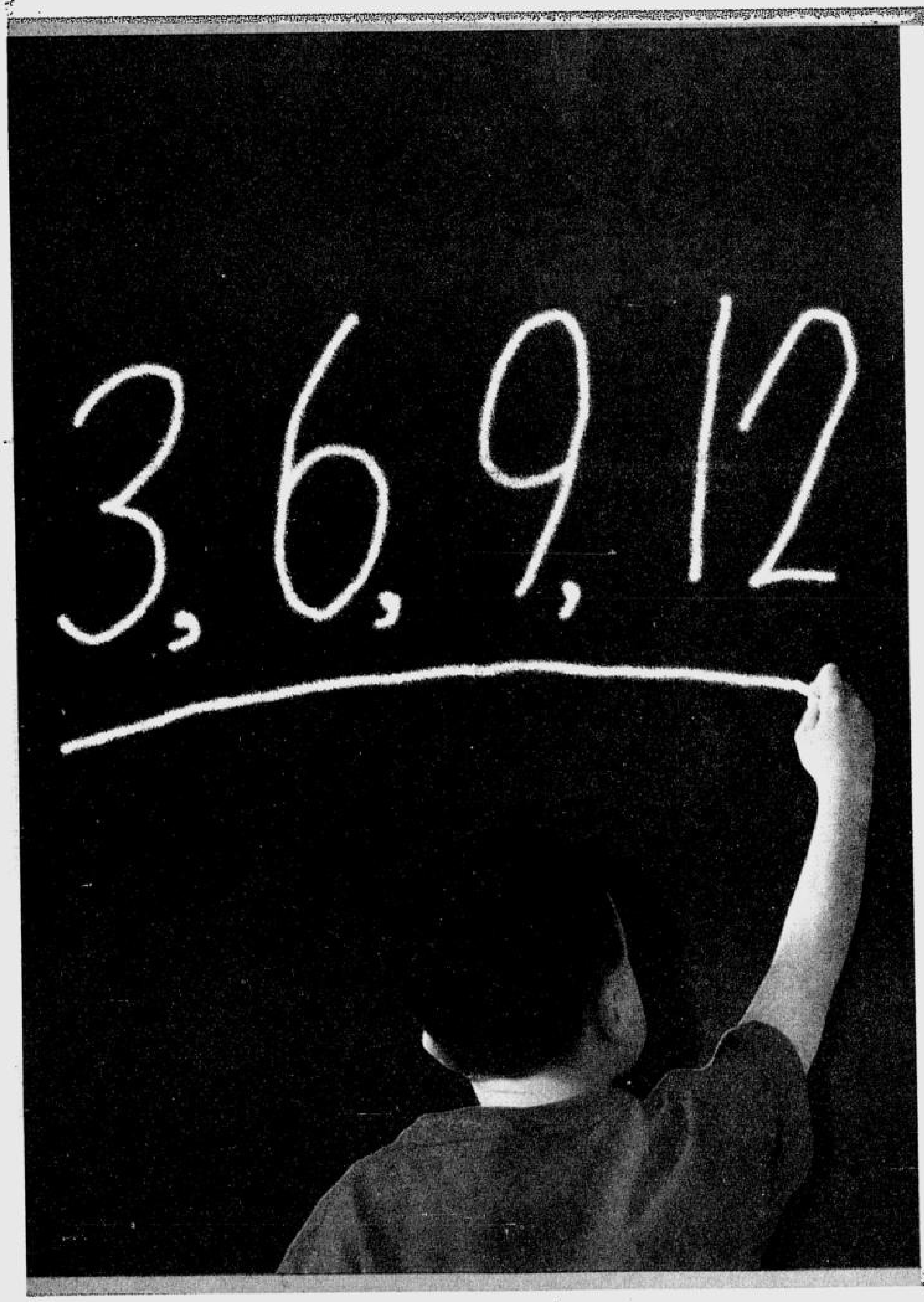
National Treasurer Sergio Edeza said the CalPERS decision showed that confidence of investors was increasing and this should bode well for the economy.

"This is a recognition that we have established political and economic stability and we have been successful in reining in inflation and managing our fiscal deficit," Camacho added.

While inflation was stable at 3.6 percent in the first four months of the year, the fiscal gap target was exceeded by some P3 billion to P6 billion against a target of P52.993 billion. Still, Camacho and Edeza stressed that the P130-billion deficit target this year would be met.

In convincing CalPERS, Camacho pointed out that the factors used against the Philippines

US/ B3



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PETRON

Local motorcycle sales down due to cheap imports

By Gil C. Cabacungan Jr.

SALES of locally assembled motorcycles tumbled in the first quarter of the year as cheap Chinese models and imported pre-owned units flood the market and eat up the market share of Japanese assemblers in the country.

The Japanese assemblers—Honda, Kawasaki, Yamaha, and Suzuki—are blaming the Department of Trade and Industry for saturating the market with Chinese motorcycle brands through slack registration requirements.

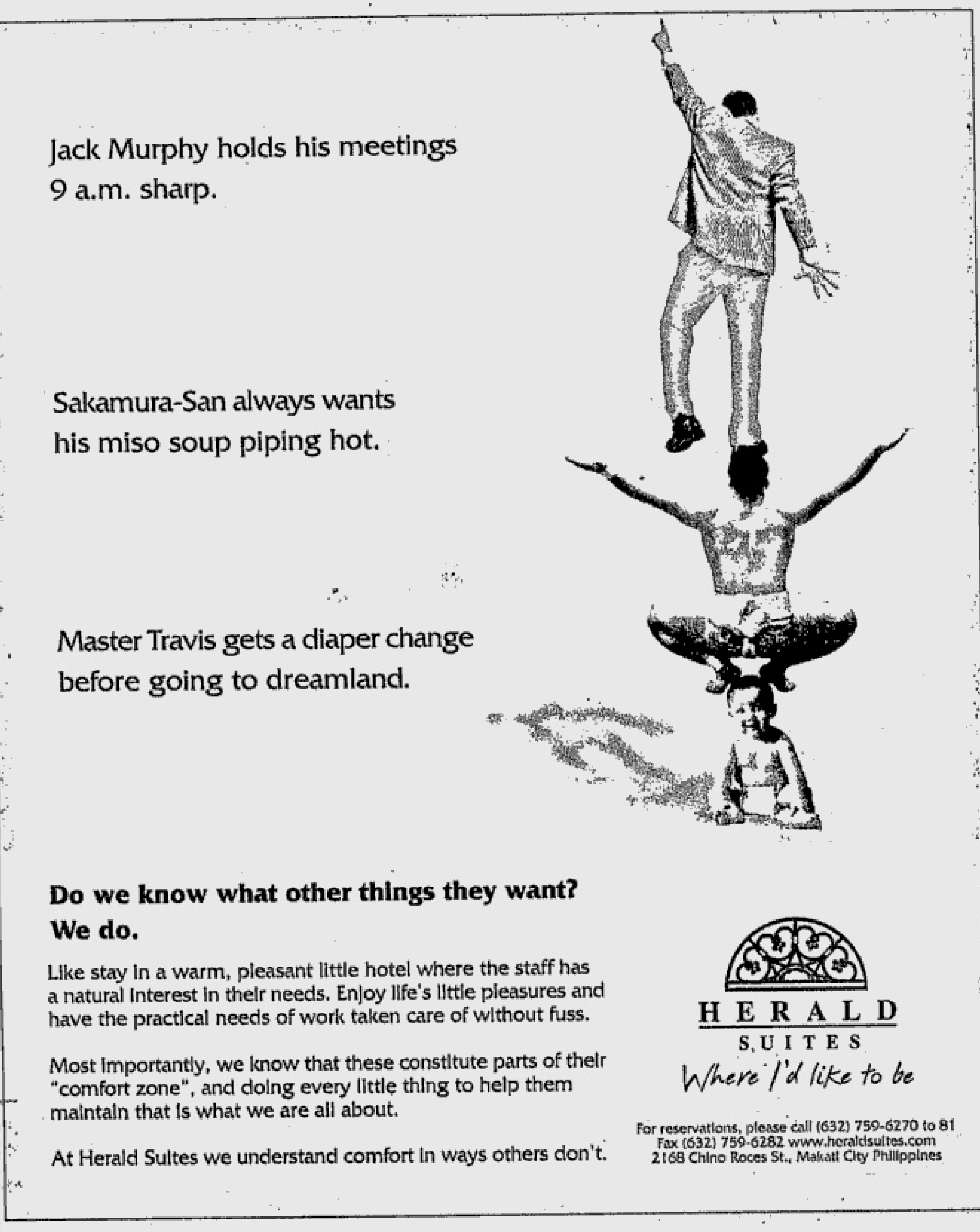
The DTI reported that motorcycle sales dropped 3.6 percent to 48,340 units in the first three months this year from 50,143 units during the same period last year. Last year, motorcycle sales climbed 16 percent to 230,000 units from 198,000 units in 2000.

The Japanese assemblers were being undercut by cheaper Chinese brands that were mostly rip-offs of Honda models. They claimed that these brands were dumped into the country because they were being sold at prices substantially lower than the domestic price.

An industry executive, who declined to be identified, said Chinese motorcycles were being undervalued enabling the importers to avoid paying higher duties. Such a practice also gives importers more elbowroom to price their motor bikes lower.

He said the DTI should stop accepting more participants in the Motorcycle Development Program, which has ballooned to 19 brands. He said China—which produces 10 million motor bikes a year—remained the biggest threat to the local assembly of motorcycles.

Aside from the surge in Chinese motorcycle brands, the local motorcycle industry is facing stiff competition from used motor bikes brought in through the Subic Bay Freeport Zone. Similar to the complaint of automotive assemblers on used vehicles, motorcycle assemblers claimed that imported, pre-owned motor bikes were posing unfair competition to the industry.



Jack Murphy holds his meetings
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his miso soup piping hot.

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Banking industry's credit card receivables up 41.6%

By Clarissa S. Batino

THE BANKING sector's receivables from its credit card business jumped by 41.6 percent last year to P47.6 billion from P33.614 billion in the previous year as lenders aggressively wooed clients to use plastic money.

The banks' exposure to the credit cards business rose by 9.3 percent in the fourth quarter from P43.558 billion in the previous quarter, data from the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas showed.

Commercial banks and their subsidiaries accounted for 97 percent of the credit card business last year. As in the past, foreign lenders cornered 46 percent of the business.

Among the aggressive players in this sector are Citibank NA, Standard Chartered Bank and HSBC.

Of the P47.614 billion, big banks account for P26.4 billion while their credit card subsidiaries accounted for P21.2 billion.

The central bank said the exposure of thrift banks to the credit card business grew to P1.6 billion in the fourth quarter from P1.2 billion in the third quarter and P500 million in year 2000.

Due to the increasing credit card business, the past due portion of the banks' credit card receivables also grew to P6.7 billion as of end-2001 from P6.3 billion in the third quarter and P4.9 billion in the previous year.

The ratio of the past due receivables to total loans of the commercial banks stood at 21.6 percent, up from 21.9 percent in the previous year. The ratio of soured receivables to loans of thrift banks went up slightly to 22.5 percent from 22.3 percent during the period.

Credit card subsidiaries reported a past due ratio of 22.1 percent or P4.7 billion out of their total exposure to the business.

The central bank cautioned banks engaged in the credit card business to review their operations following increasing complaints from the public about the stiff interest charges charged on the loans.

The BSP said the banks, in a bid to expand their client base, had become less discriminating in getting clients. It said that if the banks would be more discriminating, they would have easier time in collecting their receivables.

The BSP encouraged banks to start rationalizing their credit card activities before consumer groups start demanding for more protection.

The central bank said banks and their subsidiaries normally write off credit card loans 90 to 180 days after due date which pushed interest charges higher.

Tax incentives, policy reforms needed to develop debt market, economist says

By Elena R. Torrijos

THE PHILIPPINES should introduce appropriate tax incentives and undertake several other reforms to catch up with its neighbors in the development of a domestic debt securities market, economist Mario Lamberte said in a discussion paper for the Philippine Institute for Development Studies.

In his paper titled "Asean's Fledgling Debt Securities Markets: More Tasks Ahead," Lamberte said that while the Asian financial crisis strengthened the resolve of member-countries of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations to accelerate the development of their domestic debt securities markets, actual performance left much to be desired.

He noted that among five Asean members, Singapore's debt securities market was moving ahead of the rest while those of the Philippines and Indonesia were lagging far behind.

Lamberte cited the need for the government to make a clear choice between raising revenues and nurturing a debt securities market. The latter will call for the provision of tax incentives that will not favor one class of investors or artificially create different classes of debt securities, and the creation of a reliable yield curve of risk-free interest rates.

He noted that "whenever a conflict between developing a robust market for benchmark bonds and minimizing the cost of borrowing emerges, the government usually opts for the latter."

He said that a reliable yield curve was not established because the government had been rejecting bids for longer tenors whenever it deemed the bid rates too high (prompting private financial institutions to create an alternative reference rate). At the same time, he said that lot sizes auctioned for each tenor were relatively small.

The Philippines' tax system featuring a 0.15-percent documentary stamps tax and the 20-percent withholding tax on interest income on bond investments further reduce the returns on investments in debt securities, Lamberte said.

NFHFI
11th NFHFI NATIONAL CONVENTION
MAY 16 - 18, 2002 WORLD TRADE CENTER, MANILA
National Federation of Hog Farmers, Inc.: "Meeting the Challenges of Trade Liberalization"

11th NFHFI National Convention Raises Hope for the Hog Industry

With the effort to bring issues affecting the hog farming industry to national awareness, National Federation of Hog Farmers, Inc. will be holding its 11th National Convention at the World Trade Center. This year's theme shall be: "Meeting the Challenges of Trade Liberalization."

In line with this event, NFHFI has prepared a program of activities that will make the 11th NFHFI National Convention the biggest hog event in the organization's history.

The convention will be a gathering of hog farmers, livestock cooperatives, traders, government and non-government agencies, agricultural schools, feed millers and other allied industries and associations. A series of first-rate seminars will be featured to help inform the hog farmers of the latest industry trends. These seminars will also explain the implications of trade liberalization to the Filipino hog raisers.

Aside from these series of seminars, there will also be side events such as the Lutong Pignoy (a culinary demonstration), Lechon Festival (a parade of festively arranged lechon), Guess The Weight (a chance for visitors to win door prizes), Pig Art (an art competition with the theme "World of Pigs") and an hourly raffle.

All the major players in the hog industry will be present to show their products, to share their expertise, and to be one with the people in the industry.

A Revitalized Federation

With a determined new set of officers under the leadership of Gabriel Uy, the NFHFI will make new inroads in preparing the Filipino hog farmer for global competition. At the same time, the federation is appealing to other backyard hog raisers to come together to form an organization and affiliate with NFHFI.

"Hog raisers will greatly benefit from joining the federation. Aside from proper representation in the government, they will also enjoy access to information and discounts on production materials", Uy said.

NFHFI is duly recognized by government agencies like the Department of Agriculture, National Food Authority and the NAFC. They assist these government agencies through the consultations they provide to help in mapping out the future of the hog industry.

Presently, the federation is doing a series of consultations with the goal to buy a big part of the corn produce of the country. This is another move to help, not just the hog industry but the corn crop industry as well.

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CITIBANK JOURNALISM AWARD
Inquirer senior business reporter Clarissa S. Batino holds the Citi Journalistic Excellence runner-up award during ceremonies Tuesday at the Citibank Towers in Makati City. Flanking her are Citibank country corporate officer Catherine Weir and Bernardo Villegas of the University of Asia and the Pacific. Ms. Batino won for her 2-part article "Debt Squeeze a Ramos Legacy." The grand prize of the Citibank journalism award was won by Philippine Star reporter Des Ferriols.

Peso seen to stay within 49:$1 range

THE PESO is likely to remain within the 49 to the dollar range amid a stable economic and political climate, Bangko Sentral Governor Rafael Buenaventura said yesterday.

"We think the peso will continue to be range-bound in the 49 level and it is moving basically in tandem with other regionals against the dollar," Buenaventura told reporters.

"The peso, which remained consistent within the 49 to the dollar level since last week, is also getting support from fund inflows," he added.

Buenaventura said net portfolio inflows reached about $180 million in the three months to March.

A huge US pension fund's decision to pursue investments in the Philippines would also help, he added.

The California Public Employees Retirement System (CalPERS) announced yesterday it was reversing a February decision to pull out of the Philippine equities market.

"This is good news for us as we are the first of five countries delisted by CalPERS, and this speaks well of us," Buenaventura said.

The peso closed at 49.60 to the dollar yesterday, down slightly from 49.505 on Monday. *AFP*

US pension . . .

From page B1

like political stability, transparency, and other market factors were not fairly evaluated.

"We believe that CalPERS had overlooked in their analysis some of the developments here. So we had to communicate and point out our achievements," the finance chief said.

He also stressed that good governance and open-market policies were being practiced aggressively in the Philippines.

"This government is committed to market reforms, fiscal discipline and good governance. In doing so, we hope to benefit from increased foreign inflow that would create jobs and develop the economy," Camacho added.

CalPERS' assets total more than $151 billion and provides retirement and health benefits to 1.2 million state and local public employees in the United States.

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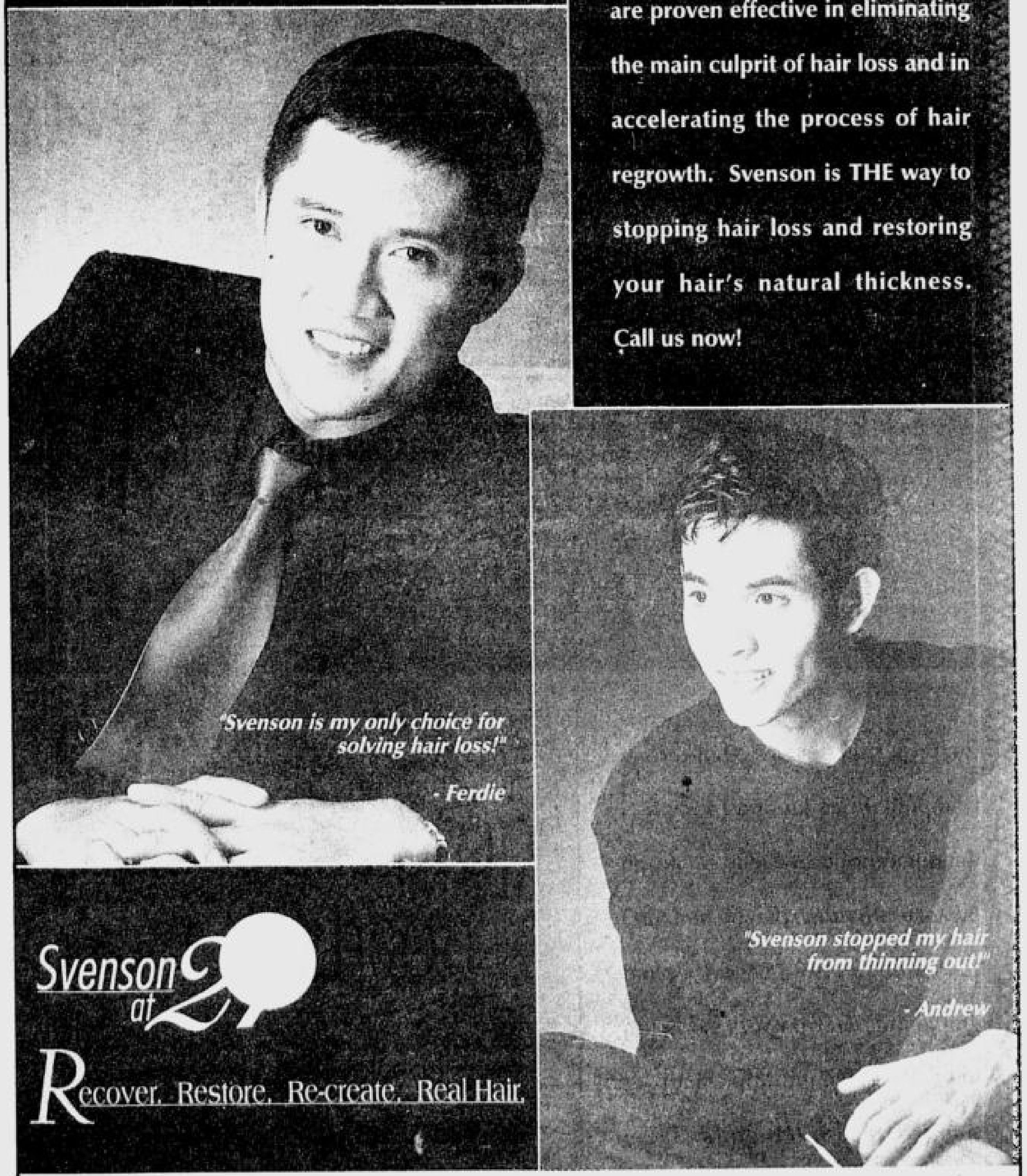

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Belle posts ₱259-M net loss due to high financing charges

By Doris C. Dumlao

LEISURE estate and gaming firm Belle Corp. remained in the red with a net loss of P259 million during the first quarter of the year, up by 35 percent from a year ago, as financing charges and losses from subsidiaries wiped out modest gains from operations.

Belle chief finance officer Manuel Gana disclosed to the Philippine Stock Exchange that the three-month deficit mostly came from the company's share in the losses of subsidiaries amounting to P89.6 million and net financial charges of P176.2 million.

Comparatively, he said the net loss from a year ago was lower at P197.2 million due to last year's net foreign exchange gain of P123.4 million resulting from the conversion of $49 million in floating rate notes (FRNs) into common stock.

Belle's flagship project is the plush Tagaytay Highlands, part of which is now held by newly listed Highlands Prime Inc. but majority control of which was sold to the group of retail tycoon Henry Sy. Among Belle's losing subsidiaries are: APC Group Inc. (which controls Philippine Global Communications) and Sinophil Corp.

Gana said Belle was able to chalk up an operating income of P3.8 million for the quarter, a turnaround from the P20 million in losses a year ago.

"Belle's continuing emphasis on cost control helped it attain a year-on-year decrease in its operating expenses excluding depreciation and amortization of P11.2 million, or 44.9 percent, from P24.8 million in 2001 to P13.7 million in 2002," Gana said.

"Most of this decrease in operating expenses resulted from a P6.7 million or 48.6 percent reduction in salaries, wages and employee benefits," Gana said.

On the revenue side, Gana said net gains from sales of real estate and club shares slid to P69.3 million from P93.8 million a year ago while gross profits fell to P39 million from P48.9 million. Sales revenue from real estate activities was generated from new sales of residential projects and club memberships.

Gana explained that the decline in sales during the period was "primarily due to continued sluggishness in the Philippine economy, and consequently slower economic activity in the property development sector."

Belle is currently in discussions with its creditors for the restructuring of debts. As of end-March, the company had a consolidated loans payable of P6.38 billion and accounts payable of P1.66 billion. Proceeds from the sale of shares in Highlands Prime, however, are expected to reduce its debts by P3 billion.

To date, Belle is seeking the 10-year restructuring of half of $68.5 million worth of outstanding fixed-rate treasury notes (FRNs) falling due this month as part of the company's overall debt reduction program.

The FRNs comprise the biggest bulk of Belle's total debts, which also include a $17-million loan from German lender Deutsche Bank and a previously restructured P2 billion debt to local banks.

BELOW BOOK VALUE

Aboitiz firm spends ₱551M for shares buyback

CEBU-BASED Aboitiz Equity Ventures Inc. has bought back 4.25 percent of its own shares from the stock market for P551.84 million as part of a strategy to boost undervalued share prices and improve earnings per share.

The Aboitiz family's profitable holding firm also declared a P505-million cash dividend, equivalent to a total of 10-centavo per share windfall to all stockholders as of May 27 this year. Payable on June 14, the windfall will consist of a regular cash dividend of 5 centavos and a special cash dividend of another 5 centavos.

AEV senior vice president and chief financial officer Juan Antonio Bernad told the Philippine Stock Exchange yesterday that the company's board approved the buyback program and executed the first tranche last Monday with the acquisition of 225.24 million shares at P2.45.

Industry sources said the block seller of the 4.25-percent stake to AEV last Monday was state-owned pension fund Social Security System.

The share buyback program will further benefit AEV whose true value is not reflected by the market, Bernad stressed.

"AEV believes the acquisition of a significant block of shares into treasury at prices below its book value will enhance earnings per share and add value for the remaining shareholders," Bernad said.

As repurchased shares become part of a company's treasury-held shares, there are less shares to divide profits by, thus improving earnings per share.

"The purchase comes at an opportune time for AEV with interest rates at historical lows and its own debt-to-equity ratio at comfortably low levels," he stressed.

The buyback executed on Monday at P2.45 per share was at a slight premium above recent trades but still 13 percent below AEV's P2.82 book value per share as of the first quarter.

As such, AEV will continue with its share repurchase program "when it believes the share price is undervalued, and that the cash expenditure for the buyback does not jeopardize prospective projects of the company," Bernad said.

The AEV board gave the company's chief executive officer and chief operating officer the discretion to determine the amount and timing of the buyback program.

AEV earlier reported a 158-percent rise in first quarter- net profits to P511 million from a year ago, on strong earnings from its power generation and banking businesses, particularly the 70-megawatt Luzon Hydro Corp. (owned by subsidiary Aboitiz Power Corp.) and Union Bank of the Philippines.

As of the same period, AEV's consolidated cash position amounted to P1.2 billion while earnings per share jumped 160 percent to 10 centavos from a year ago.

Analysts said AEV's shares were attractive in terms of both valuation and earnings performance.

"It's one of those big businesses that are able to keep debt levels manageable and given low interest environment today, they can easily get funds to pursue new projects," said Joseph Roxas, president of local brokerage Eagle Equities Inc.

For every P1 equity, AEV only had 53 centavos worth of debts in the first quarter.

Roxas also said AEV was in a very liquid financial position with a current ratio (of assets to liabilities) of 2.32 to 1.

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Slow consumer spending trims Jollibee net profit

THE NET profit of fast-food giant Jollibee Foods Corp. fell by 8.8 percent in the first quarter to P198 million from a year ago due to financing charges on fresh debts and the generally slow consumer spending.

Citing the first quarter as a weak season, JFC is projecting a strong rebound in the second quarter and the rest of the year, leading to a 10-15 percent expansion in operating income and net earnings for 2002, company chief finance officer Miguel Jose Navarrete said in a briefing yesterday.

Overall expansion will be slower this year compared to previous years in order to optimize gains from its existing branch network, but Navarrete said JFC would still spend P1.4 billion in capital expenditures this year as against the P1.3 billion disbursed last year.

Of the total capital outlay, about P700 million will go to complete its new commissary or integrated production facility in the Camelray Industrial Park in Laguna which will start operating in the fourth quarter. The balance will go to store expansion and maintenance expenses, he said.

To date, JFC is the undisputed leader in the fast-food business with 826 local and 28 international stores, making the Philippines the only country in the world where American fast-food giant McDonald's does not rank number one in the quick-service restaurant industry.

Aside from the flagship Jollibee chain, JFC operates Chinese fast-food chain Chowking, Greenwich pizza and French bakery Delifrance. It also recently acquired Japanese fast-food Tokyo Teriyaki, which has a single store in California.

JFC's system-wide retail sales rose 11 percent to P6.1 billion while consolidated total revenues grew by 7 percent to P4.7 billion during the first quarter.

Navarrete said overall system-wide sales were expected to stay above the P6-billion mark seen during the past four quarters for the rest of the year while total revenues would continue to hit more than P4 billion.

"With the positive effects of a strengthening peso and the improvement of other factors like inflation and interest rates, this favorable trend should continue over the short-term and our business is well positioned to capitalize on the expected opportunity in the balance of the year," JFC chair and chief executive officer Tony Tan Caktiong said.

Because of poor business conditions, JFC posted a 2-percent decline in same-store sales during the quarter, but the company believed that the slump has bottomed out starting March.

Operating expenses were up by 12.4 percent mainly due to increases in fuel, utility and labor costs.

The overall 8.8-percent drop in net profits is much steeper than the 4-percent decline expected by stock market analysts for the period, but Navarrete said that this was due to financing charges on the P850-million loan obtained by JFC in the second quarter of 2001.

He said JFC's sales should henceforth benefit from the summer season as the hot weather was good for its business, thus citing the second quarter as the company's strongest quarter in each year.

For the first quarter, JFC's earnings per share stood at 20.6 centavos or 7.7 percent lower than a year ago.

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Forest Hills "C"		280,000
Makati Sports Club "A"		[illegible]
Makati Sports Club "B"	260,000	
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Orchard Golf Club "B"	-	250,000
Orchard Golf Club "C"	300,000	350,000
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Rockwell	Please Call	550,000
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DISCLOSURES

KAZUYOSHI Hosomi resigned as director of **Matsushita Electronic Philippines Corp.** Elected as new members of the board of directors were Hirokazu Umeda, Shiro Onishi and Masakazu. Rodolfo Perez and Hirokazu Umeda were elected managing director and treasurer, respectively.

* * *

PICOP Resources, Inc. will hold its annual stockholders' meeting on June 26. The record date is set on May 27.

* * *

THE BOARD of **Medco Holdings, Inc.** set May 13 as the record date for stockholders entitled to notice and vote at the stockholders' meeting on June 1.

* * *

LUIS Aboitiz Jr. was elected chair of the board of **Aboitiz Equity Ventures, Inc.** Jon Aboitiz was elected president and CEO while Erramon Aboitiz was elected EVP and COO.

* * *

THE BOARD of **Chemphil Group** moved its annual stockholders meeting to Sept. 26.

* * *

MANILA Electric Co. said it cannot comment on the impact of the reported 85 centavo per kilowatt-hour reduction on its electricity bill due to the suspension of power purchase adjustment collections. It has yet to receive the implementation guidelines from **National Power Corp.** It added that operating margins would not be affected since the PPA is a pass-through account to the consumers. ***Compiled by Armin P. Adina, PDI Research***

PHILIPPINE STOCK EXCHANGE

(As of Tuesday, May 14, 2002)

STOCKS	OPEN	HIGH	LOW	CLOSE	VOLUME
BANKS & FINANCIAL SERVICES					
BANKS					
Bank of the Phil. Islands	67	67	65.5	65.5	1,308,200
China Banking Corp.	625	625	625	625	10
Citystate Savings Bank	14.25	14.25	14.25	14.25	2,000
Equitable PCI Bank Inc.	37	37.5	37	37.5	74,700
First E-Bank Corp.	1.98	1.98	1.86	1.9	374,000
Metropolitan Bank & Trust	40	40	39.5	40	76,400
Philippine National Bank	39.5	39.5	39	39.5	92,000
Rizal Comm. Banking Corp..	12	12	12	12	11,300
Security Bank Corp.	16	16	16	16	16,100
Union Bank of the Phil.	23	23	23	23	6,300
FINANCIAL SERVICE					
Filipino Fund Inc.	0.38	0.38	0.38	0.38	10,000
Sun Life Financial Serv.	1080	1090	1075	1085	15,840
COMMERCIAL & INDUSTRIAL					
COMMUNICATION					
ABS-CBN Broadcasting Corp.	31	31	31	31	2,000
Digital Telecom Phils. Inc.	0.6	0.6	0.58	0.59	2,670,000
Globe Telecom Inc.	680	685	675	685	40,220
Island Info and Tech Inc.	0.04	0.04	0.04	0.04	4,000,000
Piltel	0.43	0.43	0.42	0.42	2,890,000
Phil. Long Dis Tel Co.	457.5	460	457.5	460	53,010
Ivantage Corp.	0.49	0.49	0.49	0.49	150,000
Philweb.Com Inc.	0.017	0.018	0.016	0.018	43,000,000
POWER & ENERGY					
Manila Electric Co. A	26.5	26.5	26	26	529,800
Manila Electric Co. B	39.5	39.5	38	38.5	545,000
Petron Corp.	1.7	1.72	1.68	1.72	4,413,000
Salcon Power Corp.	1.7	1.7	1.7	1.7	151,000
TRANSPORTATION SERVICES					
Asian Terminals Inc.	1.2	1.2	1.2	1.2	30,000
Int'l Container Term'l Sv	2.8	2.95	2.8	2.9	4,881,000
Lorenzo Shipping Corp..	0.32	0.32	0.32	0.32	20,000
Negros Navigation Co. Inc.	0.7	0.72	0.7	0.7	60,000
William, Gothong & Aboitiz	2.1	2.1	2.1	2.1	50,000
CONSTRUCTION & OTHER RELATED PRODUCTS					
Republic Glass Hldg. Corp.	1.44	1.44	1.44	1.44	2,000
Sanitary Wares Mfg. Corp..	0.15	0.15	0.15	0.15	200,000
Union Cement Corp..	0.68	0.68	0.66	0.66	180,000
FOOD, BEVERAGES & TOBACCO					
Alaska Milk Corp.	2.08	2.08	2.08	2.08	25,000
Cosmos Bottling Corp.	5.7	5.7	5.7	5.7	4,000
Jollibee Foods Corp.	13.75	14	13.5	14	148,400
La Tondeña Distillers Inc.	34	35	34	34.5	3,180,000
RFM Corp..	1.32	1.32	1.28	1.3	121,000
San Miguel Corp. A	49.5	50	49	50	90,400
San Miguel Corp. B	57.5	57.5	57	57.5	38,800
Universal Robina Corp.	4.6	4.6	4.6	4.6	5,000
HOLDING FIRMS					
Ayala Corp.	5.9	5.9	5.9	5.9	48,000
Aboitiz Equity Ventures	2.3	2.32	2.28	2.3	1,631,000
Ajo.Net Holdings Inc.	0.26	0.27	0.24	0.25	3,490,000
APC Group Inc.	0.09	0.1	0.09	0.1	700,000
Alcorn Gold Res. Corp.	0.0085	0.0085	0.008	0.0085	85,000,000
ATN Holdings Inc.	3.05	3.05	3.05	3.05	30,000
Baguio Gold Holdings Corp.	0.4	0.4	0.4	0.4	30,000
Benpres Holdings Corp.	0.58	0.6	0.58	0.58	1,980,000
Basic Consolidated Inc.	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	100,000
Crown Equities Inc.	0.27	0.27	0.27	0.27	10,000
Ebecom Holdings Inc.	7.5	7.6	7.5	7.6	5,000
Filinvest Dev. Corp.	1.5	1.5	1.5	1.5	10,000
First Phil Hldgs. Corp.	26.5	26.5	26.5	26.5	163,000
Global Equities Inc.	0.125	0.125	0.125	0.125	250,000
Ionics Inc.	6.8	6.9	6.8	6.9	75,000
Megaworld Corp.	0.8	0.8	0.79	0.8	850,000
Multitech Inv. Corp.	0.63	0.63	0.6	0.6	110,000
Metro Pacific Corp.	0.26	0.26	0.25	0.25	830,000
Music Corp.	0.25	0.25	0.25	0.25	420,000
Solid Group Inc.	0.34	0.34	0.34	0.34	100,000
Tanduay Holdings Inc.	3.8	3.8	3.8	3.8	10,000
Uniwide Holdings Inc.	0.105	0.105	0.105	0.105	250,000
MANUFACTURING, DISTRIBUTION & TRADING					
Corro-Coat Inc.	1.48	1.48	1.48	1.48	5,000
Pryce Corp.	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	700,000
HOTEL, RECREATION & OTHER SERVICE					
Belle Corp.	0.43	0.43	0.4	0.4	1,510,000
Fairmont Holdings Inc.	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	50,000
Leisure & Resorts Corp..	0.38	0.38	0.38	0.38	280,000
Mondragon Intl Phils. Inc.	0.26	0.26	0.26	0.26	200,000
Philippine Racing Club	6	6	6	6	5,000
BONDS, PREFERRED & WARRANTS					
ABS-CBN Hldgs. Corp. (Pdr)	31	31.5	31	31.5	194,300
DMCI Holdings Inc.-Pref.	775	775	775	775	120
Globe Telecom Hldg. (Pdr)	800	800	795	800	21,250
PLDT (10% Pref) Series W	10.25	10.5	10.25	10.5	1,100
PLDT (10% Pref) Series Y	10.25	10.25	10.25	10.25	700
PLDT 10% Pref Series Aa	10.25	10.25	10.25	10.25	2,000
OTHERS					
Far Eastern University	450	450	450	450	10
PROPERTY					
Ayala Land Inc.	7.1	7.1	7	7	2,907,000
C & P Homes Inc.	0.25	0.25	0.25	0.25	2,810,000
Cyber Bay Corp..	0.37	0.37	0.37	0.37	1,100,000
Empire East Land Inc.	0.26	0.26	0.26	0.26	3,340,000
Filinvest Land Inc.	2.9	2.9	2.85	2.9	4,968,000
Philippine Estates Corp..	0.045	0.045	0.045	0.045	200,000
Robinsons Land Corp..	1.8	1.8	1.8	1.8	80,000
Phil Realty and Holdings	0.0525	0.0525	0.0525	0.0525	300,000
SM Prime Holdings Inc.	6.1	6.1	6	6	11,795,000
Universal Rightfield Prop.	0.055	0.055	0.055	0.055	100,000
MINING					
Itogon-Suyoc Mines Inc.	0.042	0.042	0.041	0.042	1,100,000
Lepanto Cons Mng. Co. A	0.21	0.215	0.21	0.215	410,000
Lepanto Cons. Mng. Co. B	0.225	0.225	0.225	0.225	860,000
Manila Mining Corp... B	0.004	0.004	0.004	0.004	1,000,000
Omico Corp..	0.004	0.0044	0.004	0.0044	17,000,000
Polar Mines & Dev't Corp.	0.015	0.015	0.015	0.015	9,000,000
United Paragon Mining Co.	0.042	0.042	0.042	0.042	200,000
OIL					
Imperial Res.	0.014	0.014	0.014	0.014	400,000
Interport Res. B	0.0034	0.0034	0.0034	0.0034	5,000,000
Oriental Pet. & Min. B	0.0036	0.0036	0.0036	0.0036	35,000,000
Sinophil Corp..	0.05	0.05	0.05	0.05	300,000
Vulcan Ind'l	0.14	0.14	0.14	0.14	100,000

	SHARES	VALUE (P)
Banks & Fin Svc	1,988,850	114,215,970.00
Comm'l & Ind'l	166,577,010	269,927,125.00
PRO	27,600,000	107,918,050.00
Mining	29,570,000	548,500.00
OIL	40,800,000	177,600.00
GRAND TOTALS:	266,535,860	492,787,245.00
AVERAGES		
Banks & Fin Svc	535.46	DOWN 4.96
Comm'l & Ind'l	1,849.30	DOWN 3.72
PRO	601.82	DOWN 2.99
Mining	1,338.47	UP 26.55
OIL	1.31	UNCH 0.00
All Shares Index	767.85	UP 0.86
Composite	1,347.54	DOWN 5.96

NO. OF ADVANCES: 25; NO. OF DECLINES: 30; NO. OF UNCHANGED: 43; NO. OF TRADED ISSUES: 98; NO. OF TRADES: 1,702

CURRENCIES

May 14, 2002

Country	Unit	Euro Equivalent	Foreign currency in US$	Foreign currency in Peso
United States	Dollar	1.096852	1.000000	49.4870
Japan	Yen	0.008581	0.007823	0.3871
United Kingdom	Pound	1.598552	1.457400	72.1224
Hong Kong	Dollar	0.140641	0.128222	6.3453
Switzerland	Franc	0.687380	0.626684	31.0127
Canada	Dollar	0.705371	0.643087	31.8244
Singapore	Dollar	0.608618	0.554877	27.4592
Australia	Dollar	0.500329	0.456150	22.5735
Bahrain	Dinar	2.909577	2.652661	131.2722
Saudi Arabia	Rial	0.292487	0.266660	13.1962
Brunei	Dollar	0.606934	0.553342	27.3832
Indonesia	Rupiah	0.000118	0.000108	0.0053
Thailand	Baht	0.025633	0.023370	1.1565
UAE	Dirham	0.298650	0.272279	13.4743
Korea	Won	0.000865	0.000789	0.0390
Euro	Euro	1.000000	0.911700	45.1173
Brazil	Real	0.440502	0.401606	19.8743
Denmark	Kroner	0.134500	0.122624	6.0683
India	Rupee	0.022416	0.020437	1.0114
Malaysia	Ringgit	0.288684	0.263193	13.0246
Mexico	New Peso	0.114974	0.104822	5.1873
New Zealand	Dollar	0.498842	0.454794	22.5064
Norway	Kroner	0.132600	0.120891	5.9825
Pakistan	Rupee	0.018311	0.016694	0.8261
South Africa	Rand	0.000865	0.098971	4.8978
Sweden	Kroner	0.107042	0.097590	4.8294
Syria	Pound	0.021402	0.019512	0.9656
Taiwan	NT Dollar	0.031839	0.029028	1.4365
Venezuela	Bolivar	0.001120	0.001021	[illegible]

Banks among exchange's best performers in Q1

By Doris C. Dumlao

MOST actively traded bank issues.

ALTHOUGH still reeling from a high level of bad loans, the banking sector has somehow managed to stand out in the stock market during the first quarter of the year.

The resurgence of investor confidence in the market since mid-November last year boosted the share prices of publicly listed companies across all sectors, but only few gave justice to the rally in terms of earnings performance in the first quarter. And the banking sector was among them, analysts said.

The observation was that most banking issues registered first quarter earnings that fulfilled if not exceeded the market's expectations. Based on first quarter reports released in the past weeks, positive results in the sector outweighed the negative ones.

Investor interest in the banking sector, particularly in big listed players, was revived early this year as investors bet on improved earnings despite the declining margins brought about by the sharp decline in interest rates.

"Most of the banks enjoyed very good spreads because they offset the downtrend in interest rates with savings arising from the reduction in their cost of funds," said Joanne Miguel, a stock analyst at 2tradeasia.com. "They still earn good margins because when the lending rates declined, they also brought down their deposit rates."

Top banks

The most actively traded banks in the market during the period and the respective traded values were Bank of the Philippine Islands (P2.22 billion); Equitable PCI Bank (P1.32 billion), and Metropolitan Bank and Trust Co. (P1.12 billion). A far fourth was Union Bank of the Philippines (P206.59 million).

The ranking of the first three banks corresponded with their PSE weighting in terms of market capitalization. BPI had the biggest market capitalization among the banks at P104.38 billion and a hefty weighting of 33.7 percent. Metrobank was second with P71.88 billion (23.21 percent weight) while Equitable PCI had P26.53 billion (8.57 percent). UBP ranked 6th in terms of market capitalization with P11 billion (3.83 percent). Philippine National Bank and China Banking Corp. ranked 4th and 5th among the banks with P25.70 billion and P15.48 billion in market capitalization, respectively, accounting for 8.3 percent and 5 percent of the total market.

Miguel said most of them were able to compensate their lower interest incomes not only through the adjustment of their spreads but also by generating more fee-based revenues.

For instance, Miguel noted that amid a relatively flat lending as banks remained cautious in their lending activities, Metrobank's first quarter earnings surged 50 percent to P602 million largely due to higher income from trading and widening net interest spreads. She said simulated spreads for the quarter also improved from the last year's 3.2-3.4 percent. She projected that the country's biggest bank (in terms of resources) would end up with profits of P2.6 billion for the full year.

Second biggest bank BPI saw its profits slid by 30.5 percent to P1.48 billion during the first quarter but this was largely because it came from an extraordinarily strong first quarter performance last year following its merger with Far East Bank and Trust Co.

MCSI index

Metrobank share price rose by 10 percent in the first three months of the year closing at P44 while that of BPI increased by 15.5 percent to close at P67.

Third biggest lender Equitable PCI Bank had estimated a 15.6-percent drop in its three-month profit to P120.6 million from P142.9 million a year ago. Its share price, however, went up by 49 percent to close at P36.50 in the first quarter as investors looked favorably at the settlement of the P30 billion in cash advances it obtained from the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas. This obligation was settled within less than one year after the bank was hit by a bank run at the height of the impeachment trial of former President Joseph Estrada.

Also, Equitable PCI and BPI were included for the first time to the Philippine basket of Morgan Stanley Capital International (MCSI), an organization that formulates the benchmark indices closely monitored by global institutional investors. In the past, Metrobank and Philippine National Bank were the only Philippine banks included in the MCSI index.

BPI benefited the most from the realigned MCSI basket. When the new basket was announced in April, the Ayala-controlled bank immediately got the highest weighting of 16.9 percent, edging out other Philippine blue chips in the index.

Even the Philippine National Bank, which was on most brokers' "avoid" list, saw its share price gain by 3 percent to close at P68, as the market lauded the "reverse privatization" scheme adopted by the government to rehabilitate the bank. Although a higher government stake is usually a disincentive to investors, the market realized that this was the only way to improve the bank's valuation, which is expected to pave the way for the joint sale of the holdings of the government and taipan Lucio Tan.

PNB was expected to remain in the red with a first quarter loss of P800 million, but this was 62 percent better than the P2.1 billion net loss a year ago.

Gainers

The three best performers in terms of share prices among listed banks during the period were: First e-Bank Corp. whose share price advanced by 87.69 percent; Equitable PCI, 49 percent, and Union Bank 38.71 percent.

First e-Bank Corp. bounced back from a sharp price decline last year to close at P2.44 per share (from P1.30) as its bleeding firm Metro Pacific Corp. was preparing to embark on a comprehensive strategy to address at least P18 billion in debts.

UBP continued to enjoy the market's confidence and it had proven that it deserved the market's confidence by posting a 128-percent increase in its first quarter profit to P506 million from year-ago level.

The surge in fee-based revenues offset the low interest margin for the period. UBP shares rose from P21.50 to end the quarter at P15.50.

Grace Crisostomo-Cerdenia, chief operating officer of 2tradeasia.com, said UBP would likely generate a net income of P1.74 billion for the full year, or 58 percent higher than last year's profit level.

"Potential upgrades might be warranted, depending on the sustainability of other income receipts as well as the management's efforts to put a lid on other operating charges," Cerdenia said.

"RoEs (return on equity) are seen averaging at 12.5 percent, the highest so far in the sector. The upcoming declaration of cash dividend of P0.20 per share is among its near-term come-ons. Long-term prospects remain bright owing to UBP's strength in the e-commerce segment," she said.

Another strong performer in terms of earnings during the period was China Banking Corp. whose profit rose by over 200 percent to hit P575 million from the year-ago level. Its share price rose by 5 percent in light of reports that retail tycoon Henry Sy, whose family already owns a significant stake in the bank, has been accumulating additional shares.

This was confirmed by the Sy family which, however, denied merger plans for UBP and Banco de Oro Universal Bank.

Improved sentiment

Medium-sized banks such as Security Banking Corp. and China Trust Commercial Banking Corp. also posted strong earnings performance during the period. Security Bank shares gained 11.59 percent while the price of China Trust shares stood unchanged in view of its limited public float.

The only banks that bucked the upbeat mood in the first quarter were the Yuchengcos' Rizal Commercial Banking Corp. and Global Business Bank, which was later on consolidated with parent firm Metrobank.

RCBC was burdened by the controversial P10.61-billion Poverty Eradication and Alleviation Certificate zero-coupon (PEACe bonds) which was probed by the Senate. The bank, which was the underwriter of the facility, was placed in hot water as the Senate questioned the profits generated by project proponent CODE-NGO (an umbrella organization of non-government organizations).

"In general, all stocks were up in the first quarter as they benefited from the positive sentiment, although I don't think the banks have been aggressive in lending," Eagle Equities president Joseph Roxas said.

Also contributing to the improved sentiment were the banks' efforts to address ballooning real-and-other-properties-owned-and-acquired assets (Ropoa) through the creation of asset management companies, although the proposed special purpose asset vehicle act that would provide the legal framework for these remained pending in Congress.

For healthy profits to be sustained, however, analysts said the banks would have to make more money from lending, which is their core business.

Epson posts ₱921M in earnings

By Abigail L. Ho

EPSON Philippines Corp. (EPC), the local unit of Japanese digital imaging firm Seiko Epson Corp., closed fiscal year 2001 with P921 million in consolidated revenues, making it the second biggest revenue contributor among the company's six offices in the Asia-Pacific region.

EPC also exceeded its revenue target by P21 million, posting a 5-percent growth from previous year's level.

In an interview yesterday, EPC president Hiroaki Ito said the Philippine unit fared even better than those in India, Thailand and Indonesia despite these countries' larger markets.

He cited EPC's dominance in the dot matrix market in the country as an important factor in boosting sales figures.

According to information technology research firm IDC, "Epson practically owns the dot matrix market," with a 99-percent share of the local market.

This line of printers was the biggest contributor to overall revenues, with government offices as its main market.

Ito said the total dot matrix market dropped by about 20 to 30 percent over the last two years because of the decline in government purchases.

"But this year may be better than the last two years, with a possible 20 percent growth because of higher government spending," he said.

In the inkjet market, he said EPC managed to overtake dominant manufacturer Hewlett-Packard for the last quarter of the fiscal year, grabbing a 40.7-percent market share.

Stocks down

From page B1

"The market is simply lacking in terms of inspiration. Worries that the economy's recovery will be slower than expected have zapped the life out of the market," said AB Capital analyst Jose Vistan.

"The market is worried over news of a higher than projected budget deficit for the first quarter. Missing the revenue target could mean that the projections for this year may be too optimistic," he said.

Finance Secretary Jose Camacho said last week revenue collections had fallen below target. The government has set the quarterly deficit target at P52.93 billion and will announce the first quarter data this week.

The main index dropped 5.96 points, or 0.44 percent, at 1,347.54 points. Volume rose to P492.24 million from P436.38 million on Monday.

Losers, led by Bank of the Philippine Islands, beat gainers 30 to 25 and there were 43 stocks unchanged.

"The announcement of Calpers to keep their investments was rather ignored by investors. There is more dust to be cleaned (up). A higher than expected budget deficit is making investors worried," said A&A Securities research head Astro del Castillo. ***Reuters***

GOINGS-ON

BPI's housing madness in Davao

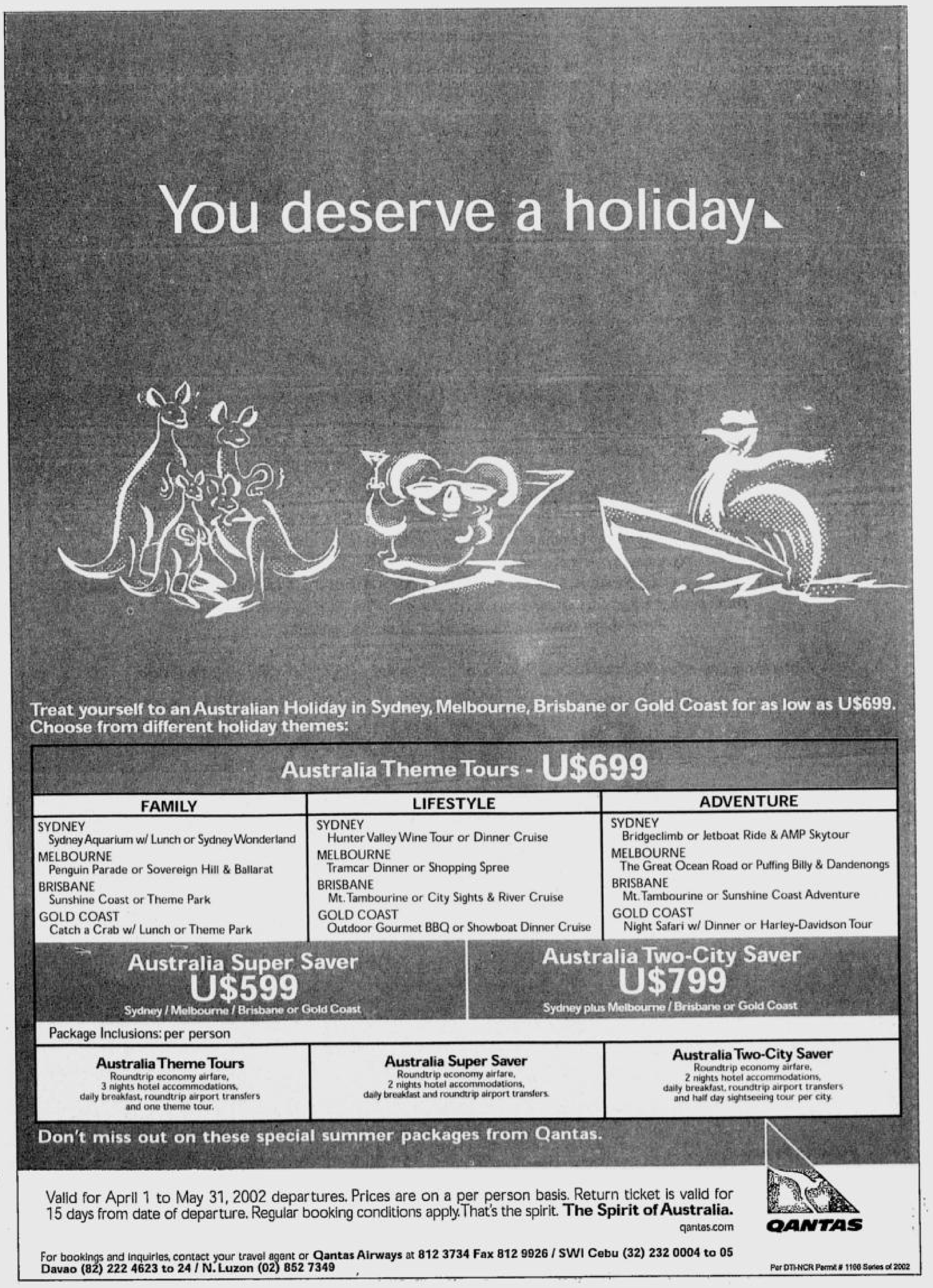
BPI Family Bank, in cooperation with Davao's top real estate developers, will hold a "Housing Madness" from May 24 to 26 at SM City, Davao. This is in line with the bank's commitment to make available affordable housing packages with specially designed financing schemes that offer low monthly amortization, discounts from developers, fast five-day credit decision, and no application fee arrangement.

Potential buyers can avail themselves of these exclusive housing loan schemes only from BPI Family Bank. The rates are further slashed to provide the lowest monthly amortization ever of P1,015 a month for every P100,000 loan amount at a minimum loanable amount of P400,000.

Breaking into Saipan market

LVP Pacific Development in Saipan, an affiliate of EHL Pacific Builders, is now using Apo Galfan Color Roofing, the only Philippine-made metal roofing material with a 10-year warranty.

Produced by Puyat Steel Corp., Apo Galfan Color Roofing is being specified now by LVP Pacific Development for its numerous major projects in Saipan owing to its superior attributes on corrosion resistance and formability.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Per DTI-NCR Permit # 1100 Series of 2002

Foreign chambers score GMA over infra promises

By Gil C. Cabacungan Jr.

THE JOINT Foreign Chambers of Commerce has criticized the Macapagal administration for its failure to sustain the drive to undertake infrastructure reforms that President Macapagal-Arroyo promised in her State of the Nation Address last year.

"We are concerned that reforms of the infrastructure sector have yet to gain the momentum necessary to facilitate the realization of the economic and social goals set out in the Sona 2001," leaders of the local chambers of businessmen from the United States, Australia-New Zealand, Canada and Europe said in a letter to Trade Secretary Manuel Roxas II.

The President promised in her first Sona to come up with concrete results in solving the country's infrastructure problems that had been behind the high cost of doing business in the Philippines.

The foreign chambers said the "comparative inefficiency of infrastructure" has been a major obstacle to higher investments, employment generation and economic activity.

The Australia-New Zealand Chamber of Commerce is currently drafting a policy position paper on the foreign businessmen's concerns regarding infrastructure.

Foreign businessmen are urging the government to:

- increasingly tap more private sector expertise and capital in developing and managing infrastructure systems;
- optimize government procurement processes and focus only on providers with proven capability and experience;
- accommodate appropriate foreign ownership and associated management interests; and,
- ensure a stable process, eliminate bureaucratic intervention and mitigate judicial process risks.

The foreign chambers said the draft paper had been forwarded to four government agencies and three senior economic ministers for their comments that would be incorporated in the final report.

The foreign chambers were hopeful that their recommendations would be taken as a "constructive contribution" to the government and Congress for necessary policy and legislative innovations.

Gov't to double number of call centers to 80

THE MACAPAGAL administration is expecting to double the number of call centers in the country to 80 next year as the Philippines firms up its status as a call center hub in the region.

Virgilio Peña, presidential assistant for information and communication technology, said there were 40 call centers operating in the country, most of which came from the United States.

"We believe that we could easily double the number of call centers next year," Peña said.

He said there were two types of call center investments in the country—those that invested to build their own facilities here, and those that used existing call centers here and just put in their special equipment for their use.

He said investments in call centers would depend on the facilities used and capacity or number of seats.

He said call centers should generate a substantial number of jobs—a 100-seat call center that operated on three shifts would need at least 200 people.

ePLDT Inc., the information technology services arm of Philippine Long Distance Telephone Co., is leading the country's drive to build a call center hub here.

ePLDT has tied up with Echostar Communications Corp. for a P312-million call center facility in its Makati office. It has linked up with Teletech Holdings Inc., which plans to build an 800-seater call center here.

Peña said the influx of call centers would eventually provide more job opportunities for the growing number of information technology students who graduate every year.

On the current dilemma of too many IT graduates fighting for too few job opportunities, Peña said this was addressed by President Macapagal-Arroyo in one of her commencement speeches.

"She urged the new graduates to acquire new skills because companies were looking for additional skills, specifically for technical jobs such as programming and system design," he said.

Peña concurred with other government officials that Philippine IT graduates had very general skills which are only good for entry-level jobs in computer firms.

Like those who take up engineering, Peña said IT graduates should also undertake further training to hone their skills. *Gil C. Cabacungan Jr.*

Smart, Makati city gov't reach cell site agreement

SMART Communications Inc. has won a deal to put up cell sites inside major government installations in Makati.

Under an agreement with the Makati City government, the country's biggest mobile phone service provider may install indoor and outdoor global system for mobile communications antennae and transmission links in government-owned buildings and other public places in Makati.

Smart will initially put up mobile phone facilities outside the Makati City Hall and at the Makati City coliseum.

"We are pleased to partner with the Makati City government in this particular project designed to improve Smart's services within the city. This is one way for Smart to support the local government in their information and communications technology efforts," Smart's head of project management and implementation for network services division, Rodante Medina, said in a statement yesterday.

In an interview, Smart public affairs head Ramon Isberto said Makati was a good area, as there were a lot of voice and text messaging traffic in the city.

Medina said the first leg of Smart's GSM equipment installation would be done in public buildings, but there were also preliminary talks for the Makati City government to encourage private companies to allow Smart to put up facilities within their premises.

He said Smart was prepared to give incentives to these companies.

The Makati City government was also reported to be considering giving Smart a "master permit" so it would not have to secure individual permits for each cell site in Makati.

Abigail L. Ho

Napocor to receive $750M from Finance to pay debts

THE NATIONAL Power Corp. will receive this month some $750 million from the Department of Finance for its financing needs, the state-run power firm's acting president said yesterday.

Napocor officer-in-charge Roland Quilala told reporters that the money could not have come at a better time, as Napocor no longer had anything left to cover its spending for the next six months.

"It is a good thing that we will finally get hold of it. Otherwise, we could not finance our expenses starting June," he said.

Napocor has earmarked some $396 million to settle part of its debts in the first six months of the year.

The power firm needs over $800 million in debt servicing funds this year.

It has a $157-million loan falling due in July, and it has to pay the Bureau of Treasury roughly P6 billion that it used for its operating expenses last year.

The $157-million loan was part of an $800-million loan that Napocor secured in the early '90s, as it rushed the construction of power plants and transmission facilities to end an energy crisis that resulted in eight- to 12-hour power outages.

US investment firm Bear Stearns and Co. was supposed to provide Napocor P6 billion, but the Sept. 11 attacks derailed this plan.

Quilala said the government had already shouldered around P6.5 million in payments to the National Electrification Administration because of delays in the disbursement of Napocor's allocations from the finance department.

The Power Sector Assets and Liabilities Management Corp. earlier raised Napocor's 2002 funding requirements to $1.5 billion from $750 million.

PSALM president Edgardo del Fonso said the Asian Development Bank had already agreed to finance $500 million of the $750 million, but a deal would not be finalized until next month.

Procurement reform bill gets businessmen backing

THE MAKATI Business Club and 20 other business and civil society groups have endorsed to the Senate the proposed Government Procurement Reform Bill that aims to promote transparency in the bidding of government contracts and help fight graft and corruption.

In a letter to Sen. Edgardo Angara dated April 29, executive committee members of the Transparency and Accountability Network (TAN) stressed that the measure was a key element in the effort to weed out corruption in government, particularly in the procurement process.

"We express our strong support for the passage of the government procurement reform bill, three of which have been filed in the Senate and referred to your committee," TAN stated in a letter to Angara, chair of the Senate committee on constitutional amendments.

Other members of TAN include independent pollster Social Weather Stations (SWS), Procurement Watch Inc., Institute for Politics and Governance, Transparency International Philippines, Philippine Center for Policy Studies, and Pagbabago@Pilipinas.

In a recent SWS survey on enterprises, businessmen said that about 15 percent of the contract price of government procurement projects go to corruption. This is equivalent to a leakage of about P13 billion a year.

TAN said the proposed bill also features reforms that seek to minimize, if not totally eradicate, abuse and misuse of discretion in the bidding process.

It also ensures transparency with the proposal to publish in newspapers as well as in the Internet the price ceiling for a specific project.

The bill also aims to shorten the time spent on procurement from seven months to two months by doing away with the tedious pre-qualification process when inviting bidders for a government contract. Instead, post-qualification will be strengthened. Electronic means will also be used to pre-qualify bidders.

Gift Gate becomes first partner of MAWF-Phils.

GIFT Gate has signed a memorandum of agreement with the Make-A-Wish Foundation Philippines as its first corporate partner.

Through its "Get a Gift, Grant a Wish" program, Gift Gate will donate proceeds from the sale of Aloha Kitty Gift Bouquets and other selected merchandise for one year towards making the wishes of children suffering from life threatening illnesses come true.

The campaign will be launched at noon today at the Aloha Kitty Luau at SM Megamall with MAWF wish grantor Martin Nievera. An initial check of P100,000 shall be donated by Gift Gate to the foundation to address pending wishes.

Signatories of the memorandum of agreement are Gift Gate head Virgie Ramos, MAWF president Phillip Pastoral, MAWF-marketing director and Inquirer corporate relations manager Celine Madamba, MAWF legal counsel Anita Regalado, MAWF-membership director Barbie Puzon and MAWF-Wish Search director Karen Cipriano.

Since 1980, the Make-A-Wish Foundation has granted the wishes of over 100,000 children with life-threatening illnesses to enrich the human experience with hope, strength and love. Today, it is the largest and most respected wish-granting organization in the world with 23 participating countries spanning five continents.

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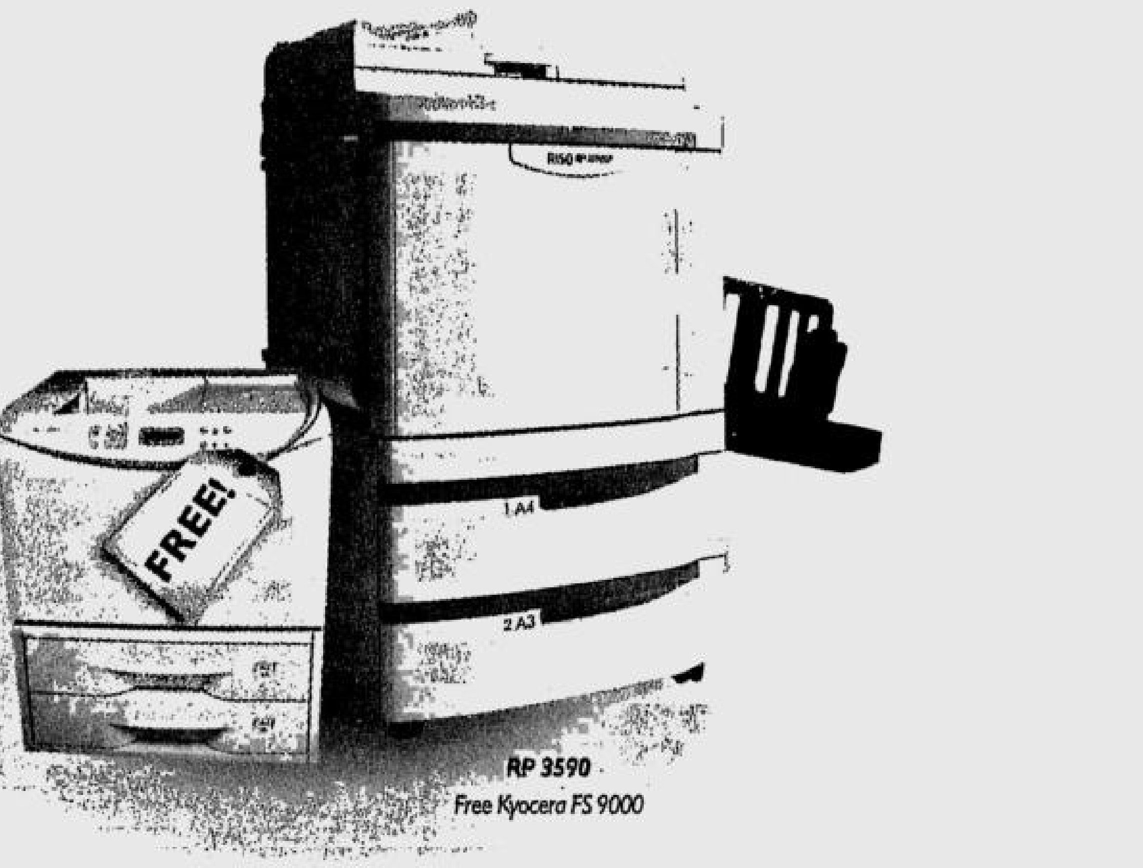

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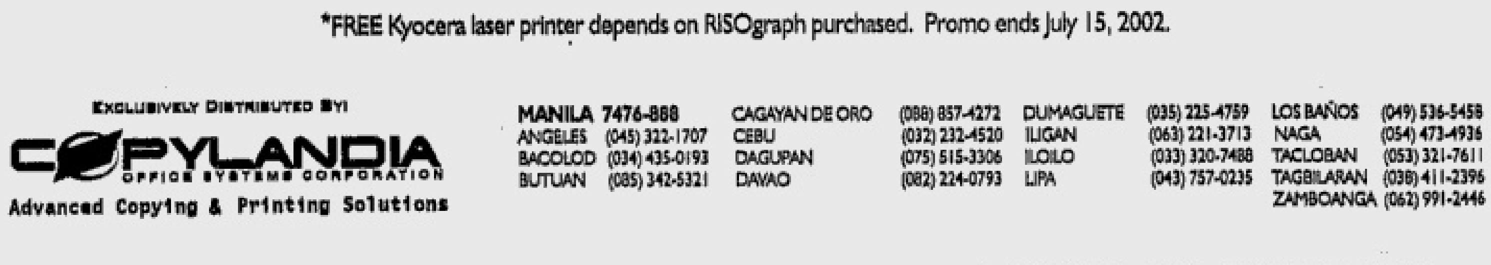

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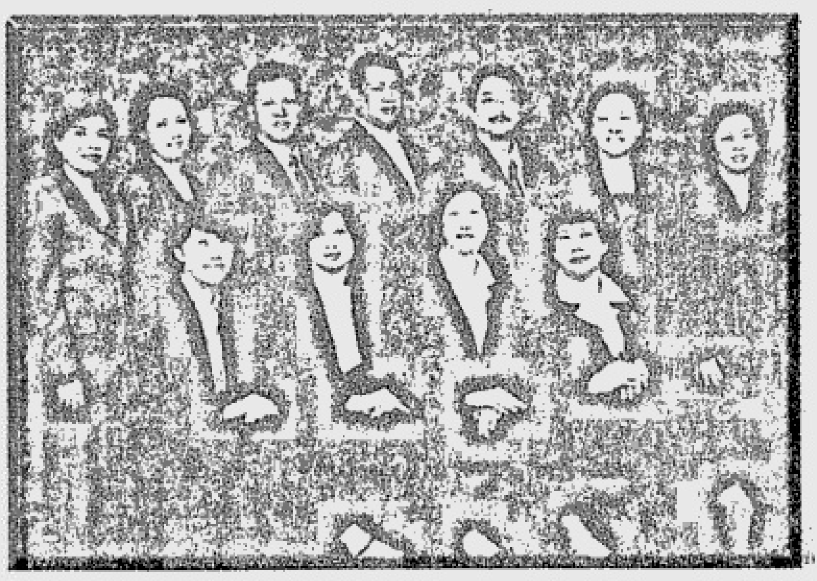
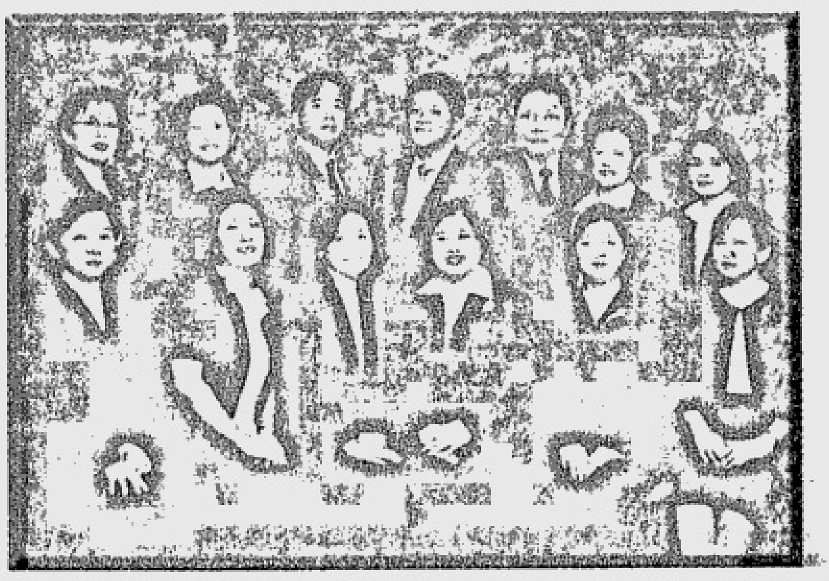


Chestnut Sales Team
Headed by: Estella Ng, second from upper right

Tindalo Sales Team
Headed by: Fredezwinda Gonzales, seated right



Sequoia Sales Team
Headed by: Benjamin Yao, third from upper right

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MINISTERS' ASSESSMENT

Japan reaches end of long slump

TOKYO—The Japanese economy has reached the end of a long slump thanks to a revival in exports and a pick-up in price levels, while private consumption also appears to be stable, according to key ministers.

But analysts warned a shaky recovery in the United States might stunt a return to growth in Japan where industrial activity was still relatively weak.

"I believe the economy seems to have bottomed out," Finance Minister Masajuro Shiokawa said, pointing to signs a slide in consumer prices was ending and wholesale prices were rebounding in certain areas.

Consumer prices—a leading indicator of inflation or deflation—in March fell 1.2 percent from the previous year, marking the 31st straight month of declines.

But they rose 0.2 percent from February, triggering hope that a protracted period of deflation—which hurts corporate profits and raises the value of debt in real terms—was over.

"Exports remain steady, keeping the momentum that started in the autumn," Shiokawa told a news conference.

"The deterioration in the jobless rate is also slowing," he said.

Japan's unemployment rate in March fell to 5.2 percent—its lowest level since last August—from 5.3 percent in February, despite market expectations of an increase, while a slump in exports continued to ease thanks to a pick-up in demand from major markets such as the United States.

"There are obvious signs of stabilization, and no more signs of deterioration," said Jean-Pascal Rolandez, head of Japanese Equity Research at BNP Paribas, adding that anything export-related showed signs of improvement.

Contributing to the renewed optimism, State Minister for Economic and Fiscal Policy Heizo Takenaka said domestic demand had remained stable despite high unemployment levels and weak wages.

"Generally, consumption does not fall sharply, even if there are bad economic conditions and neither will it rise sharply in good conditions," he told a separate briefing.

"It seems domestic consumers tend to be very calm," Takenaka said, declining to comment directly on whether the Cabinet Office would upgrade a top economic report for the third month in a row.

But analysts cautioned against over-confidence in an imminent recovery after data released Monday showed Japanese private sector machinery orders fell 6.2 percent in March from a month earlier to its lowest level in over 14 years.

"The Cabinet Office is forecasting another 0.3 percent quarter-on-quarter drop in orders in April-June, and orders usually lead capital expenditure by six-to-nine months," said Commerz Securities senior economist Ron Bevacqua. **AFP**

Business economists raise full-year growth forecasts

WASHINGTON—Responding to the surprising strength of the US economy in the first quarter, a panel of business economists on Monday sharply raised its forecast for US growth this year as it struggled to catch up to reality.

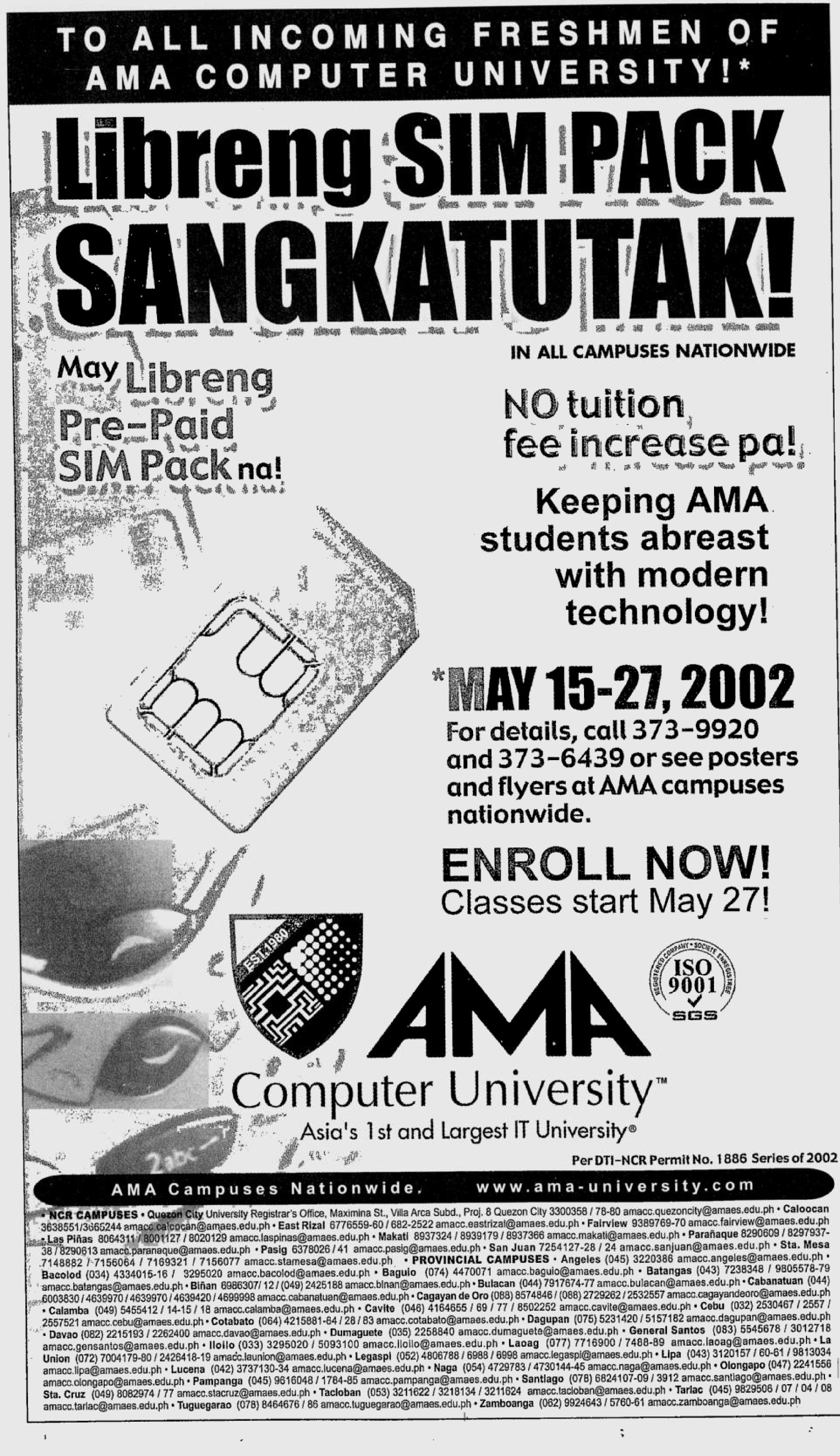
The National Association for Business Economics said the US economy would likely expand at an average rate of 2.8 percent, a much better performance than the 1.5 percent projected in February. The projection represents the consensus of a panel of 30 professional forecasters.

The February forecast reflected a belief that US gross domestic product would grow at a 1.3-percent rate in the first quarter. Instead, it rocketed ahead at a 5.8-percent pace.

"That first quarter surge has pushed NABE's annual 2002 GDP estimate up over a percentage point," economist Maureen Allyn wrote in the survey summary. "Estimates of growth in the remaining three quarters of the year are virtually unchanged from three months ago," she said.

For 2003, the NABE panel sees growth of 3.7 percent.

For this year, the forecasting panel expects a solid rise in consumer spending, sharply higher government outlays and a housing sector that maintains its strength. ***Reuters***



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Indonesia says it won't import 2.5M tons of rice

JAKARTA—An official has denied a forecast by the US Department of Agriculture that Indonesia will become the world's largest rice importer this year with imports of 2.5 million tons, a report said Tuesday.

"Even with the El Niño (weather phenomenon), the country's total rice importation will not surpass 1.3 million tons," the agriculture ministry's director for planning and finance, Kaman Nainggolan, told the Jakarta Post daily.

Nainggolan said the ministry was optimistic this year's unhusked rice output would reach the government target of 53 million tons, or the equivalent of 33 million tons of milled rice which is about the level of domestic consumption.

He said indications issued by the national meteorological agency showed there was a strong chance El Niño would not occur this year.

A return of El Niño, which would prolong the dry season and could lead to drought, might force Indonesia to import a huge amount of rice to offset damaged production, agriculture experts have said.

Nainggolan said the absence of El Niño would allow Indonesia to just import 500,000 tons of rice.

The head of the country's national logistics agency Bulog, Wijanarko Puspoyo, has said Indonesia would import more than one million tons of rice this year in anticipation of poor harvests and El Niño. ***AFP***

Outlook reflects HK autonomy, says Moody's

HONG KONG—In its annual report on Hong Kong, Moody's Investors Service says its positive outlook and A3 and Aa3 country ceiling ratings are a recognition of the island's ability to maintain its fiscal and economic autonomy since Britain's 1997 handover of Hong Kong to China as a special autonomous region.

The government of Hong Kong has no debt rated by Moody's. Although China's central government is committed to a policy of "one country, two systems," the economies and financial markets of Hong Kong and the rest of the country are increasingly integrated, reports Moody's.

"While there is no absolute link between Moody's ratings of Hong Kong and China, it would be difficult for them to diverge very far," says Moody's vice president Steven Hess, author of the report.

"The bank deposit ceilings do differ due to Moody's view that the probability of capital controls or a deposit freeze, however remote, is lower in Hong Kong."

The government of China's foreign-currency bonds are rated A3 by Moody's and its foreign-currency bank deposits are rated Baa1.

"Should Hong Kong's ratings move up at some time, they will likely not move far from China's corresponding ratings," according to Hess. ***Reuters***

News Corp. seen reporting biggest corporate loss

SYDNEY—Rupert Murdoch's News Corp. Ltd. is expected to unveil Australia's largest ever corporate loss in New York late Tuesday as the attention of the country's media focuses on the federal budget.

The media group, also tipped to report an increase of about 8 percent in third quarter sales to $3.551 billion, has already confirmed it will take a non-cash write-down of $2 billion on its investment in the Gemstar interactive TV guide.

Analysts say the figure will be more like $5 billion if the company reflects the full extent of a recent slump in the share price of Gemstar, in which News holds a 43-percent stake.

This would leave the company facing a loss of between $1.9 billion (A$3.5 billion) and $5.5 billion for the third quarter, dwarfing the previous record loss of A$2.3 billion posted by BHP for the year to July 31, 1999. ***AFP***

China, Asean begin talks on free trade zone

BEIJING—Senior trade officials from Southeast Asian countries and China on Tuesday launched the first round of talks on setting up a free trade area, which could cover a third of the world's population.

"To formally launch the negotiation process of the China-Asean free trade area is a historic step in the cooperation between China and Asean," Chinese Vice Trade Minister Long Yongtu told the opening of the meeting.

Leaders from the Association of Southeast Asian Nations and China last November agreed to establish a free trade area within the next 10 years, a move that could result in an integrated market of some 1.7 billion people.

Long said the trade zone would be the largest of its kind among developing nations and would boast a gross domestic product of $2 trillion and a total of some $1.2 trillion in annual trade volume.

"The decision of China and Asean to establish the FTA is also an active attempt of strengthening cooperation among developing nations," Long said.

However, he anticipated rocky negotiations, but pledged China's interest in establishing the zone lay in the "necessity and urgency" of strengthening economic links following the Asian financial crisis and a slowdown in the global economy.

"In our road toward the FTA, we will inevitably face the challenges of adjusting industrial structure, optimizing division of labor and cooperation, enhancing coordination, accommodating different development stages and clearing up skepticism and worries," Long said.

The establishment of the zone, reflected the political will of the region's leaders and would be based on the region's geographic proximity, complimentary resources and industrial structures and historic and cultural ties, he said.

Negotiations during the three-day meeting were being held at the expert level and formed part of the third China-Asean senior economic official's meeting. *AFP*

Oil prices at 8-mo highs, await US stocks

SINGAPORE—US oil prices hovered near eight-month highs just below $29 on Tuesday as the market predicted further shrinkage of the US crude supply cushion and pondered a possible supply crunch at the end of the year.

US light crude rose 28 cents in Asia to $28.66 a barrel, extending Monday's 39-cent rise in New York. Prices are at the highest level since mid-September, having gained more than $2.20 in the past five trading days.

Weekly US fuel stocks figures due to be released later on Tuesday are expected to show a drop in national crude inventories of about 2.5 million barrels, taking levels into a year-on-year deficit for the first time in 2002.

The American Petroleum Institute report comes a day after the West's energy watchdog, the International Energy Agency, predicted that oil supplies could tighten significantly in the next six months and inventories could plunge dangerously low if the Opec cartel maintained its supply curbs.

"We're facing a situation in the latter part of the 2002 not unlike year 2000, when Opec was in a position of having to unwind quotas to prevent too tight an oil balance," said Michael Rothman, senior energy specialist at Merrill Lynch, in a daily market comment.

The IEA warned that current production by the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries could cause stocks to fall dangerously low by September if supply curbs by the cartel coincided with a strong upswing in demand, as in 1999 after the Asian economic crisis.

"If producers keep output flat, the consequence is a significant stock drop and we have seen this happen before," said Klaus Rehaag, editor of the report, recalling 1999 when shrinking stocks led oil prices spiking above $35, the highest in a decade.

The IEA said Opec production fell to its lowest level since June 1993 in April because Iraq suspended exports for a month in protest of Israel's military incursions into Palestinian areas.

Having slashed output by almost 20 percent since the start of 2001, some Opec ministers have signaled that there is unlikely to be any rise in group output at a meeting set for June. *Reuters*

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Americans under 35 savings behind older, poorer groups

WASHINGTON—Younger Americans with larger incomes and college education still save less when compared with older Americans with smaller incomes, according to a report that examines a Federal Reserve survey of US household wealth.

More than a quarter of all American households have net assets of less than $10,000, according to a report released on Monday by the Consumer Federation of America and the Credit Union National Association.

In general, these Americans with little or negative financial assets tended to be young, have low or moderate incomes and rent, not own, their homes.

The group also tends to have different financial attitudes than other Americans, Consumer Federation of America executive director Stephen Browbeck said.

They tend to plan for the next few months rather than for at least five years and to spend more than their incomes, he said.

"They not only cannot cover major emergency expenditures without borrowing, they probably cannot afford to buy a house, pay for an education, or start a business," Browbeck said at a news conference.

In contrast, about 42 percent of American households had net assets of at least $100,000, according to the 1998 Federal Reserve Survey of Consumer Finances. Almost 5 percent of American households had net assets of at least $1 million.

The report used the term "wealth-poor" to define affluence and poverty not just by income, but by wealth, or assets, as well.

It found that wealth-poor Americans divided into two major groups, the under-35 households with moderate incomes and the older households with smaller salaries.

But the majority of the group who had negative assets, or debt, were under 35. They also had an annual income of at least $25,000 and at minimum some college education.

In contrast, the Americans who had small savings tended to be black or Hispanic households made up of people over 35 who had less education and smaller incomes.

The younger group, who had average debt of about $15,000, also were more inclined to take financial risk when saving or investing and more likely to spend more than their income, compared with the second group, the report said.

The data show the need to teach young people more about saving, said Dan Mica, chief executive officer of the Credit Union National Association.

"We need to redirect thinking, to educate young people particularly on the miracle of compound interest," Mica said. "They can indeed, with just a little bit of savings, have the funds to educate children, buy a home, to retire."

But economist Keith Leggett said the information should not be viewed as alarming.

The report is consistent with life-cycle models of economic theory, he said. People under 35 are borrowing against future earnings, he said. *Reuters*

UBS profits slide 14% in Q1

ZURICH—The biggest Swiss bank, UBS, announced on Tuesday that first-quarter profit slid by 14 percent to 1.363 billion Swiss francs (937.4 million euros) from the equivalent figure 12 months earlier, and said earnings for the full year were unlikely to better its results in 2001.

"The market environment remains difficult, but the progress of all our businesses is very encouraging," UBS president Peter Wuffli said in a statement.

Earnings per share dropped 15 percent to 1.27 francs (0.87 euros) while operating income in the first quarter was 9.589 billion Swiss francs, a 5-percent drop compared to the same period in 2001.

The bank said a large part of the group's drop in profits was recorded by UBS Capital where results were "disappointing."

The statement said: "The prospects for a global economic recovery in the latter part of the year remain intact, although it is far from certain how strong any growth may be.

"Because of this, results in 2002 are unlikely to improve on the performance in 2001," it added.

The influx of net new money reached 11.8 billion Swiss francs, judged "satisfactory" given the current market environment and the short term affect of the Italian tax amnesty, it said.

UBS said the two factors had reduced net flows in private banking in the first quarter by 4.5 billion Swiss francs.

The Italian move grants amnesty to those who have avoided taxes by putting their money abroad. *AFP*

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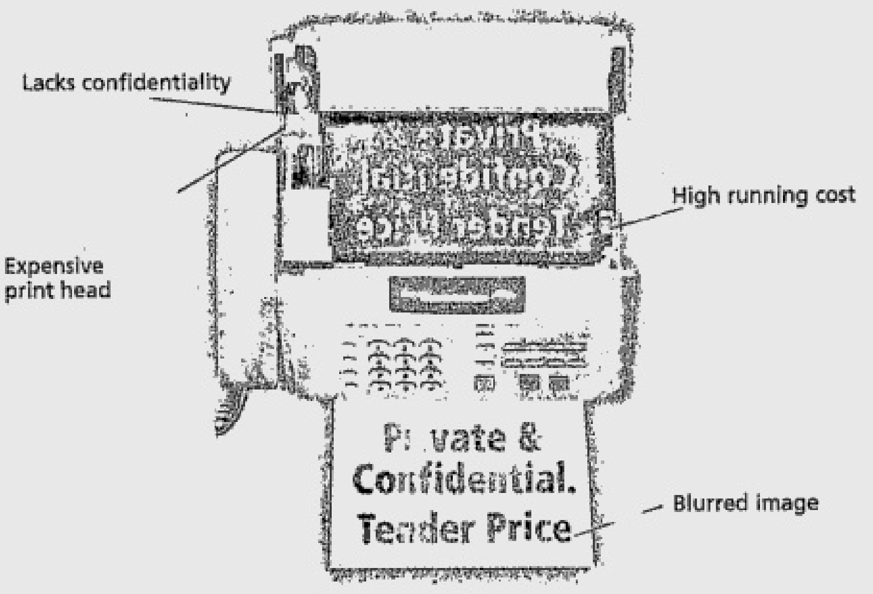

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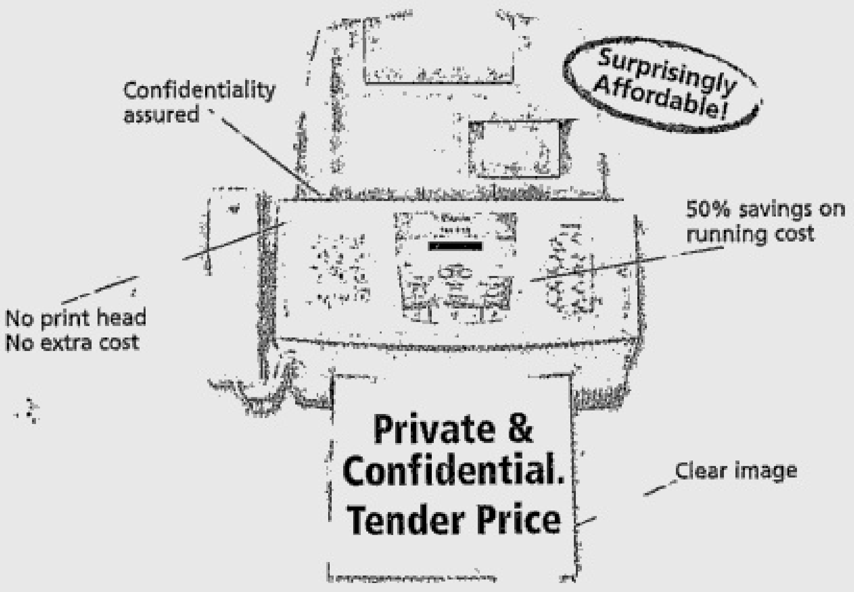
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PHIVIDEC INDUSTRIAL AUTHORITY

PHIVIDEC Industrial Estate in Misamis Oriental

MESSAGES

My warmest greetings and congratulations to the officers and staff of the **PHIVIDEC Industrial Authority (PIA)** on the occasion of the ***Ground Breaking Ceremonies of the Mindanao Conatiner Terminal Project (MCTP).***

I laud the PIA for attracting investments to Northern Mindanao. You help bring into the country much needed foreign exchange earnings through exports geenerated by your locators.

With the MCTP, PIA is on its way to achieve its vision to transform the PHIVIDEC Industrial Estate in Misamis Oriental (PIE-MO) into a fully developed industrial estate by year 2013, contributing to the economic development of Mindanao.

I am one with you in making our Mindanao people feel the blessings of employment and development.

Uswag Mindanao alang sa kalamboan!

(SGD) H. E. GLORIA MACAPAGAL ARROYO
President, Republic of the Philippines

Congratulations to the PHIVIDEC Industrial Authority (PIA) on the PHIVIDEC Industrial Authority (PIA) on the Groundbreaking Ceremonies of its Mindanao Container Terminal Project (MCTP). It will definitely serve as a catalyst to economic and industrial development in Misamis Oriental and Northern Mindanao. The realization of becoming a leading agro-industrial area and a major transshipment point in Mindanao truly deserves public commendation.

Kudos to a job well done!

(SGD) HON. AUGUSTO H. BACULIO
Representative, 2nd District-Misamis Oriental

It is truly a deep honor and privilege that I extend my warmest greetings to the PHIVIDEC Industrial Authority (PIA) on the Groundbreaking Ceremonies of its Mindanao Container Terminal Project (MCTP).

On this occasion, I wish to convey my gratitude for the valuable contributions PIA has rendered to the Province of Misamis Oriental. It has fervently initiated growth and development of the region through its various projects like the MCTP. It is foreseen to trigger more employment and income opportunities for the residents of the Northern Mindanao area. The MCTP will also give meaning and spirit to the thrusts of the administration of President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo of making Mindanao the food basket of the country. As Governor of Misamis Oriental and Chairman of Mindanao Water Transport Task Force, let me wish and hope that the partnership we have established will continue to flourish as we unite our efforts towards building a better Philippines!

Congratulations!

(SGD) HON. ANTONIO P. CALINGIN
Governor, Misamis Oriental

Greetings and congratulations to the PHIVIDEC Industrial Authority on the Groundbreaking Ceremonies of its Mindanao Container Terminal Project.

PIA has truly proven that PHIVIDEC Industrial Estate in Misamis Oriental is the industrial hub and showcase of Northern Mindanao with the onset of the MCTP.

The MCTP will enhance the mobility of goods and strengthen social and cultural linkages among neighboring countries. It will spur economic and industrial development of Cagayan de Oro and Mindanao.

Congratulations and good luck!

(SGD) HON. VICENTE Y. EMANO
Mayor, Cagayan de Oro City

It is indeed a great pride and honor of every Tagoloanon to have the Mindanao Container Terminal Project in our municipality. We prayerfully hope for the sincerity and success of the project in bridging the true economic development in our area, in Mindanao and the country as a whole.

On its Groundbreaking Ceremonies, my people and I congratulate PHIVIDEC Industrial Authority for making all these possible. We deeply assure you of our support towards the achievement of this great endeavor, further let me take this opportunity to thank you for helping our town—Tagoloan Tarantula.

(SGD) HON. YEVGENY VINCENTE B. EMANO
Mayor, Municipality of Tagoloan

Our warmest greetings and congratulations to the PHIVIDEC Industrial Authority as it celebrates the Groundbreaking Ceremonies of the Mindanao Container Terminal Project.

As PIA envisions itself to become a fully developed Industrial Estate by year 2013 contributing to the economic development of Northern Mindanao, our Municipality will always be a strong partner in all its endeavors and we will continue to do our share in the materialization of PIA's objectives. We are certain that the future will bring more successful years with our joint undertakings.

Mabuhay!

(SGD) HON. JULIO T. UY
Mayor, Municipality of Villanueva

As Chairman of the Board of PHIVIDEC Industrial Authority (PIA), it is with some sense of fulfillment that this development-oriented project for Mindanao has started to take-off.

Preparing this project involved a high degree of dedication and partnership. Dedication specially from the PIA leaders notably from Administrator Evangelista and our PIA workforce. Foreign Partnership with our funding source, the Japan Bank for International Cooperation; our design and management consultants – the Pacific Consultants International; and our contractors – the Mitsubishi-Kawasaki-Toyo Joint Venture. Local Partnership with the Government Officials of Tagoloan and Villanueva, Misamis Oriental; the different Government Agencies namely, NEDA, DOF, DBM; and the private Sector – the business group of Northern Mindanao. To all who have contributed to the realization of the MCTP – we express our heartfelt appreciation.

We must move on to implement the MCTP with the same spirit of commitment and enthusiasm. We appeal to both the government and private sector to help us and be one with us in realizing this vision.

God bless us!

(SGD) GEN. LISANDRO C. ABADIA (RET.)
Chairman, PHIVIDEC Industrial Authority

JAPAN
Official Development Assistance

Our warmest felicitations to the People of the Republic of the Philippines for the groundbreaking ceremonies of its Mindanao Container Terminal Project (MCTP).

Our Government takes pride in extending assistance in hastening the development program of an ally. PHIVIDEC Industrial Agency (PIA) will surely achieve its goals of making this project the centerpiece of economic prosperity in Northern Mindanao.

We can assure everyone, with your untiring support, that this worthwhile endeavor will be the landmark of progress on this part of your archipelago.

Congratulations and more power!

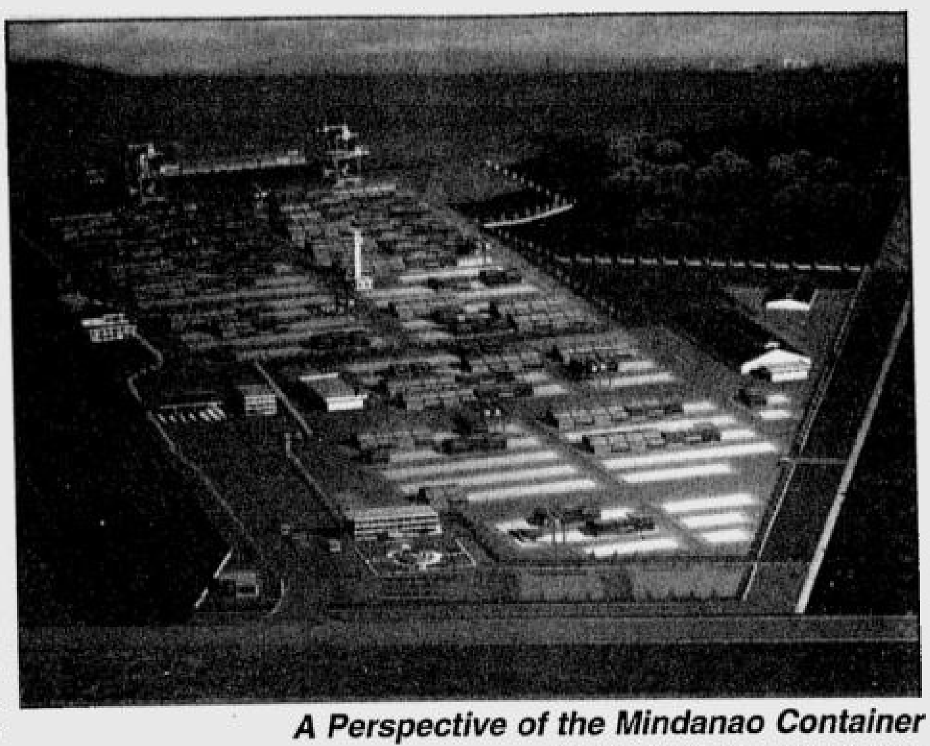
PGMA Leads Groundbreaking Ceremonies of the Mindanao Container Terminal Project

President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo leads the groundbreaking ceremonies of the Mindanao Container Terminal Project today in Tagoloan, Misamis Oriental.

One of the visions of the PHIVIDEC Industrial Authority (PIA) is the development and management of a Port to serve the present and would be locators of PIE-MO. Incidentally, the National Economic Development Authority (NEDA) Medium Term Development Plan identified the need of a modern port in Northern Mindanao.

The MCTP is consistent with the vision of Northern Mindanao to be the transshipment hub serving the whole of Mindanao and Visayas, enhancing the mobility of goods, and strengthening social and cultural linkages between the BIMP-EAGA and the neighboring countries.

The Port will complement the existing Cagayan de Oro Port in handling its present capacity and to accommodate the increasing bulk of cargoes coming from and going to the food basket of the Philippines, Mindanao. The Port is designed to handle containerized, bulk and general cargo both domestic and international.



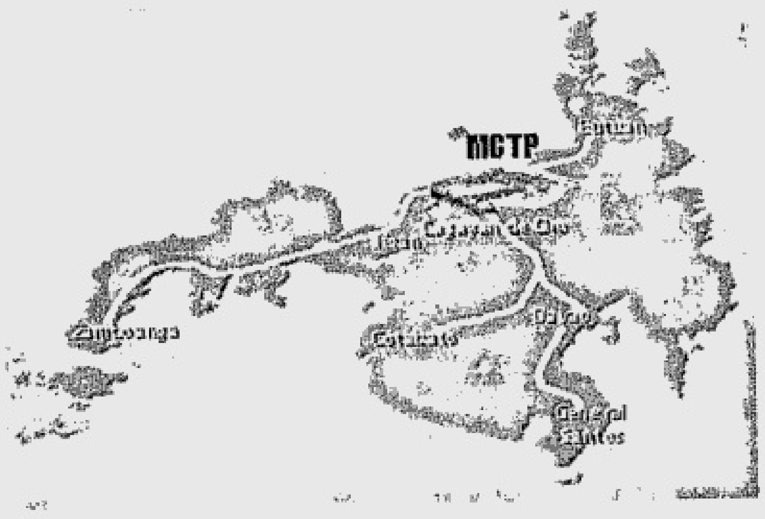
A Perspective of the Mindanao Container Terminal Project Phase I

MCTP PHASE I AND II

The **MCTP PHASE I** is a containerized sea port that will have 2 gantry cranes and operation will be fully automated. It has a total project cost of US$ 85.32M. The Japan Bank for International Cooperation (JBIC) granted a loan to PIA, payable in 40 years at 1% interest with 10 years grace period. JBIC will cover 85% of the total project cost while the remaining 15% will be shouldered by PIA. In accordance with the JBIC Loan Agreement, the MCTP (Phase I) will start operating by October 2004. Since PIA is eight months ahead of schedule, actual port operation will start by January 2004. The construction of the Port was awarded to the Mitsubishi-. Kawasaki-Toyo Joint Venture. Construction started in February 2002.

The **MCTP PHASE II**, on the other hand, is the Bulk and Food Terminal. It is a modern bulk and food handling facility that would reduce handling cost for fertilizer loading and unloading, and transshipment, ultimately for the benefit of Mindanao farmers. It will have wharf cranes and belt conveyor system. Phase 2 is intended for long-term lease to private operators. It provides storage silos and warehouses.

The MCTP is foreseen to trigger more employment and income opportunities for the residents of the Northern Mindanao area. It is a clear manifestation that the government gives priority to the development of Mindanao. ■



The MCTP is connected to all major points in Mindanao via arterial roads

PHIVIDEC Industrial Authority—industrial hub of NorMin

The PHIVIDEC Industrial Authority (PIA), a government-owned controlled corporation, manages the largest industrial estate in the Philippines, the PHIVIDEC Industrial Estate in Misamis Oriental (PIE-MO).

PIA is mandated to develop the Estate as an industrial area and to be able to contribute to the economic and social development of Northern Mindanao and spearhead its industrial development.

PIA equips the area with necessary infrastructures to encourage inflow of domestic and foreign investments. PIA, through PIE-MO, answers the Philippine Government's policy to disperse industries to the countryside as a means of equitably distributing resources and to catalyze and sustain social and economic development in the Philippines.

PIE-MO, as an Industrial Estate, has the following advantages:

- Favorable climate throughout the year;
- Outside of typhoon paths and earthquake faults;
- 9 km shoreline which can accommodate jumbo vessels;
- Available facilities and utilities like power, industrial & domestic water and telecommunication (NDD,IDD);
- 0.5 to 1 ha subdivided land ready for occupancy;
- Large tracts of industrial land for investors with large area requirement;
- Stable peace and order condition; and
- Near the amenities of modern living.

PIE-MO investors enjoy the following benefits and incentives:

- Lowest land lease rates (P10~P15/ sq. m./year);
- Duty free importation, if product is meant for foreign market;
- Exemption from wharfage dues if pier is constructed by the investor
- Continued availment of BOI privileges if industry is registered with them; and
- Employment of foreign nationals on technical and management levels.

With the vigor and determination of its management and staff, PIE-MO will definitely become a fully developed industrial estate by year 2013, contributing in the economic development of Mindanao and the Philippines as a whole. ■

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Tech world sorrow shrivels work for bankers

MENLO PARK, Calif.—The easy, gridlock-free drive from San Francisco to Menlo Park these days is perhaps the most emblematic sign of the times in this high-tech mecca.

Technology visionaries used to inch impatiently in traffic on southbound Interstate 280 for the 35 miles toward Menlo's gold-paved Sand Hill Road, where venture capital firms financed their dreams and investment banks took them public and shopped their companies to eager buyers.

Today, though, the brown, sun-scorched grass along the highway symbolizes just how much things have dried up.

The brown placards that festoon marquees of low-rise commercial complexes on Sand Hill—once riddled with the bland names of investment firms that inevitably incorporated the word "Capital"—are increasingly blank. "Space for lease" signs instead blight the three-mile strip.

Silicon Valley's high-powered deal makers have seen a staggering drop in business. Just a short three years ago, investment bankers with technology expertise frantically were rushing initial public offerings to market and forcing lucrative, but often ill-conceived, mergers. Now, they just try to help clients survive.

"We're grief workers now instead of empire builders," lamented one tech banker, who requested anonymity to keep from alienating companies he advises and other potential clients.

Statistics support the anecdotal tales of woe.

Investment banks advised on just 81 technology deals worth about $7.8 billion in the first quarter compared with 146 deals worth about $94.7 billion a year earlier, according to market research firm Thomson Financial.

Dismal earnings and a hazy outlook on Corporate America's technology spending plans have left chief executives wary of what acquisitions could do to their already shaky stocks.

"M&A is out of favor with investors," said another California-based investment banker. "The market hates it."

Instead of juggling four or five deals at a time as they did just a few years ago, merger advises instead spend their time coddling clients, or "building relationships," as many of them call it.

By staying in close contact with companies, bankers hope to better shape and understand their clients' business models and long-term plans. That way, when confidence returns, they will have gained trust and proven themselves to CEOs.

That has been tough to do, though, as Wall Street firms have slashed their banker ranks, either by cutting jobs or by reshuffling the sectors in which they work. Turnover can hurt their chances to retain business.

"I had one client tell me we were hired because we were the only ones pitching business with the same folks who went in two years ago," one banker said.

Specialized banks, such as Robertson Stephens and Broadview International, that once catered to tech start-ups, have been hit hard, too, as their larger rivals have swooped in to handle the small deals they previously would have ignored. Both banks have held talks with potential buyers.

"I haven't seen a Robbie Stephens banker at a deal in 18 months," one banker said.

The few deals struck take far longer to get approval as directors scrutinize financials and management looks around every corner for any signs of instability. Bankers say conference calls that took an hour now take five hours and deals that took six weeks to close now take four months.

Many executives finally have accepted that their stocks will trade for about $5 a share, not $100, and are entertaining offers, bankers report. However, buyers are still waiting for some hint of a turnaround in profits or tech spending to even consider acquiring a rival.

"I have a hard time recommending to a lot of people that they buy something," one investment banker confessed.

The 200 biggest public companies in the San Francisco area, most of which are technology firms, lost a combined $77.7 billion last year, a stunning reversal from the combined $116.2 billion profit they booked the previous year, the San Francisco Chronicle reported last week.

The profound impact of those numbers stamped on their faces, sadsack investors moped around one of the industry's biggest and oldest conferences last week.

Attendance at the 30th annual JP Morgan H&Q technology conference plummeted 23 percent from its peak last year to 3,260 people, the lowest figure since 1994—before the world discovered the Internet.

"This is some of the worst sentiment I've ever seen," said Gary Nackerson of Firelake Research. "In a lot of ways, it's even worse than last September." ***Reuters***

Argentina seeks replacement to savings freeze

BUENOS AIRES, Argentina—Argentina, in a major government policy U-turn, scrambled on Monday to find another way to end a despised freeze on depositors' savings after scrapping plans to convert the deposits to bonds.

With a 12-hour strike by hardline unions planned for Tuesday and daily protests against a rapid rise of poverty and the freeze on deposits, President Eduardo Duhalde would need to come up with a replacement for the bonds-for-savings plan—and fast.

Officials said Economy Minister Roberto Lavagna was huddled with his economic team to devise a new strategy to help free up the creaking banking system and convince international lenders to deliver aid vitally needed to help relieve the country's grinding four-year recession.

One proposed alternative for Latin America's No. 3 economy to the savings freeze plan, which Lavagna said on Sunday he had set aside to "take another approach," includes selling off the bankrupt government's real estate and using the proceeds to return savings.

"The government has been analyzing the possibility of using idle state assets to resolve the savings freeze," Cabinet Chief Alfredo Atanasof told local television. "This is one of the ideas. There is a very clear political decision to end the freeze, to free depositors of this worry."

Officials say the bond plan was abandoned because the banks were unhappy with it and implementation costs were high. ***Reuters***

NTT seen buying back shares worth up to $788M

TOKYO—Japan's top telecommunications firm Nippon Telegraph and Telephone Corp. will buy back up to 100 billion yen ($788 million) worth of its shares, a business daily said Tuesday.

By absorbing NTT shares in the market, the telecommunications giant hopes to correct a supply-demand imbalance created by repeated sales of NTT shares by the government, the Nihon Keizai Shimbun said.

The share buyback would be implemented this year, and NTT would announce the scheme later Tuesday, when the company unveiled its earnings in the fiscal year to March 2002.

NTT has forecast its net loss for the year ended explode to 865 billion yen—a record for a Japanese non-financial institution—after a two-trillion-yen write-down of assets. ***AFP***

South Korea probes downgrade of Samsung unit

SEOUL—South Korea's main financial watchdog has started an investigation into UBS Warburg LLC after the Swiss brokerage downgraded the ratings of Samsung Electronics Co., officials said Tuesday.

The Financial Supervisory Commission acted after accusations that a UBS Warburg report was leaked in advance when there was heavy selling of Samsung Electronics shares by foreign investors.

Samsung said it asked for a thorough probe. "SEC has asked the FSC to investigate UBS Warburg to see whether it had violated laws," the world's largest memory chip-maker said in a statement.

A UBS Warburg official at the brokerage's regional headquarters in Hong Kong told AFP "an audit is taking place" but would not give other details.

The watchdog said it launched a probe Monday into whether UBS Warburg released information to major foreign clients in advance or made unauthorized gains by selling futures.

"(Our) inspection team on Monday sent inspectors to UBS Warburg's Seoul office to check whether or not it violated related stock regulations," an FSC official said.

In a report on Thursday, UBS Warburg downgraded its SEC rating by two notches to "hold" from "strong buy," sparking heavy selling by foreign investors. ***AFP***

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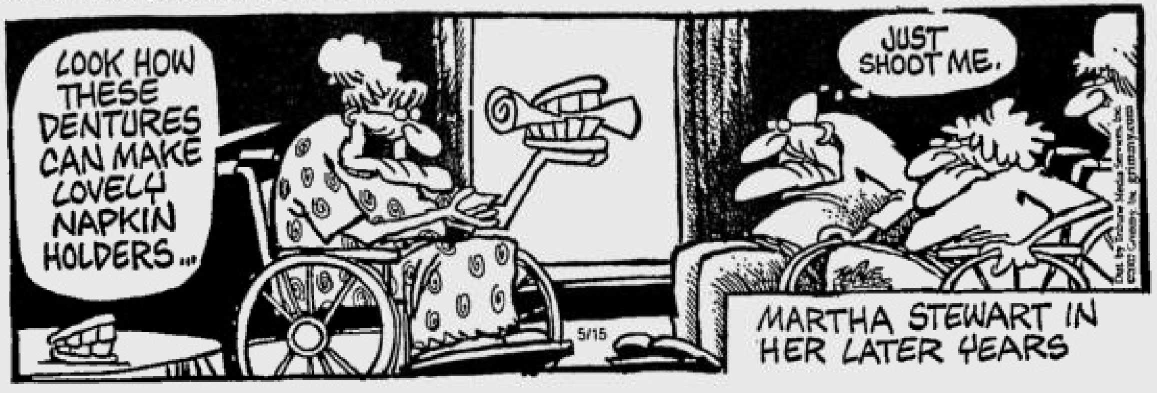
BY MIKE PETERS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MARTHA STEWART IN HER LATER YEARS

A. LIPIN

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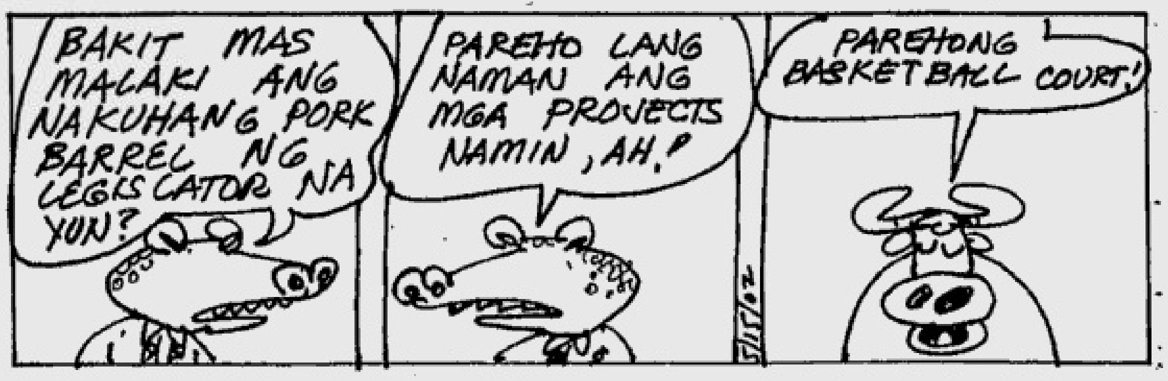
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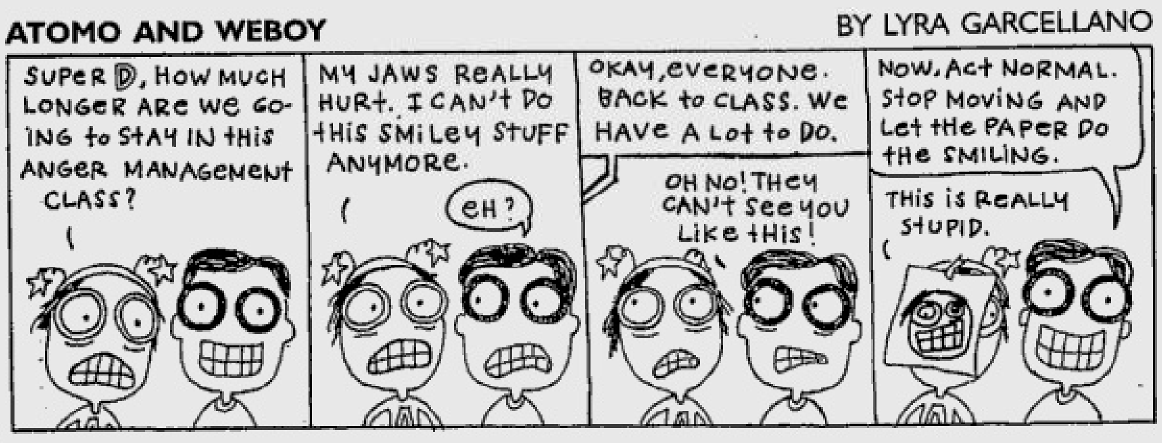
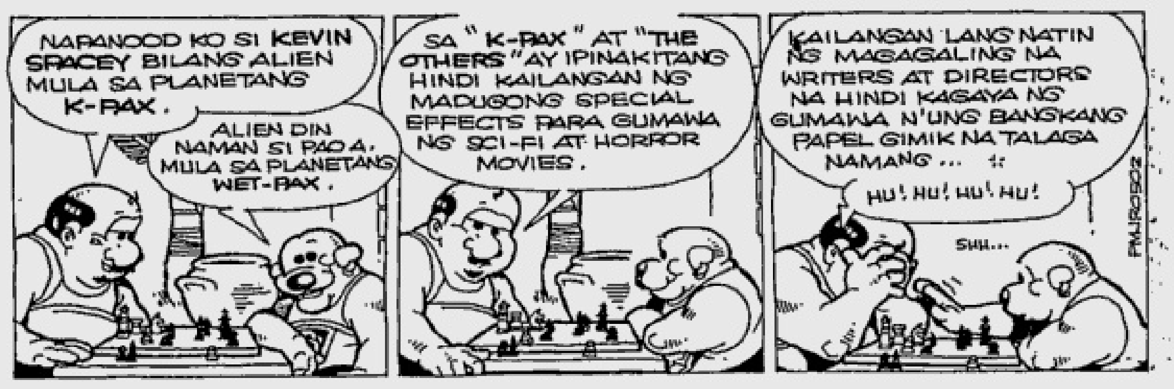

SUPER D, HOW MUCH LONGER ARE WE GOING TO STAY IN THIS ANGER MANAGEMENT CLASS?
MY JAWS REALLY HURT. I CAN'T DO THIS SMILEY STUFF ANYMORE.
EH?
OKAY, EVERYONE. BACK TO CLASS. WE HAVE A LOT TO DO.
OH NO! THEY CAN'T SEE YOU LIKE THIS!
NOW, ACT NORMAL. STOP MOVING AND LET THE PAPER DO THE SMILING.
THIS IS REALLY STUPID.

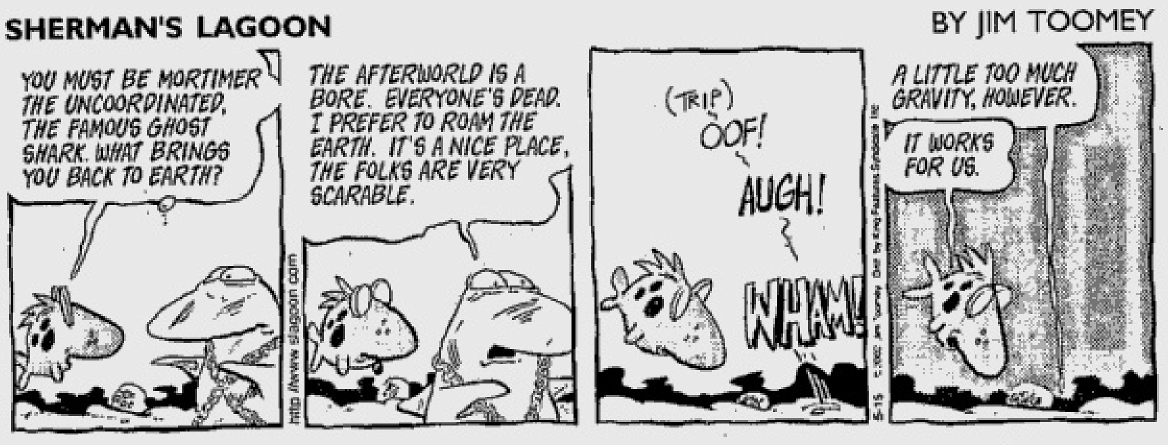
PUGAD BABOY

BY P.M. JUNIOR


NAPANOOD KO SI KEVIN SPACEY BILANG ALIEN MULA SA PLANETANG K-PAX.
ALIEN DIN NAMAN SI PAO A. MULA SA PLANETANG WET-PAX.
SA "K-PAX" AT "THE OTHERS" AY IPINAKITANG HINDI KAILANGAN NG MADUGONG SPECIAL EFFECTS PARA GUMAWA NG SCI-FI AT HORROR MOVIES.
KAILANGAN LANG NATIN NG MAGAGALING NA WRITERS AT DIRECTORS NA HINDI KAGAYA NG GUMAWA N'UNG BANGKANG PAPEL GIMIK NA TALAGA NAMANG...
HU! HU! HU! HU!
SHH...
PMJR0502

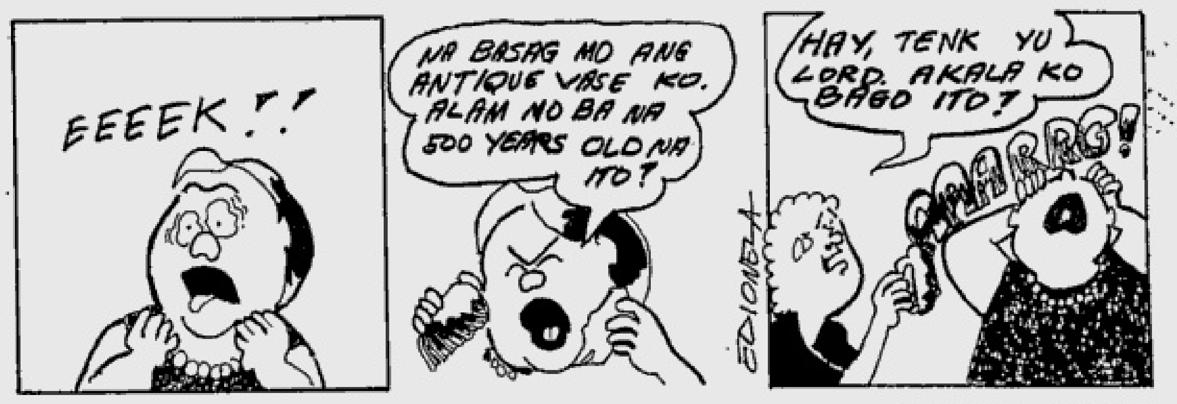
SHERMAN'S LAGOON

BY JIM TOOMEY


YOU MUST BE MORTIMER THE UNCOORDINATED, THE FAMOUS GHOST SHARK. WHAT BRINGS YOU BACK TO EARTH?
THE AFTERWORLD IS A BORE. EVERYONE'S DEAD. I PREFER TO ROAM THE EARTH. IT'S A NICE PLACE, THE FOLKS ARE VERY SCARABLE.
http://www.slagoon.com
(TRIP)
OOF!
AUGH!
WHAM!
5-15
A LITTLE TOO MUCH GRAVITY, HOWEVER.
IT WORKS FOR US.

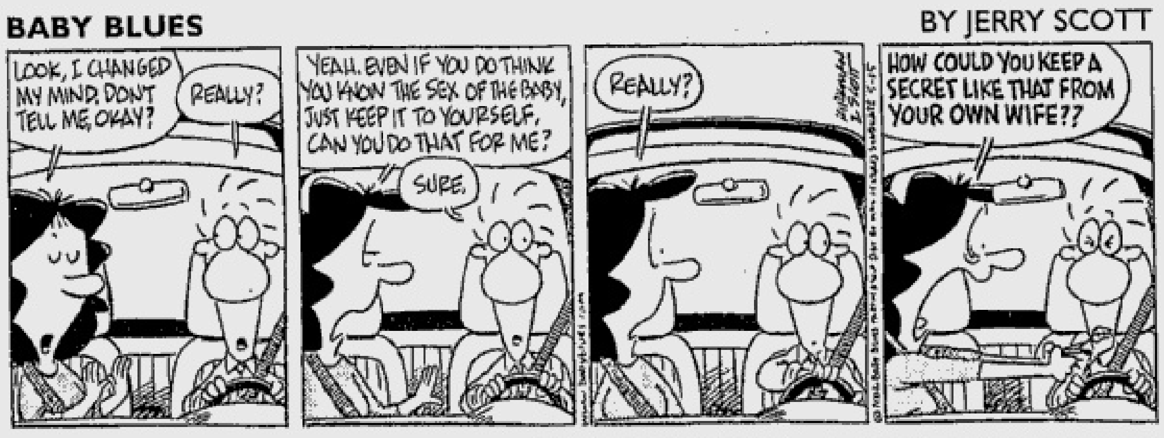
SIMO

BY EDGAR DIONELA


EEEEK!!
NA BASAG MO ANG ANTIQUE VASE KO. ALAM MO BA NA 500 YEARS OLD NA ITO?
EDIONELA
HAY, TENK YU LORD. AKALA KO BAGO ITO?
ARRRG!

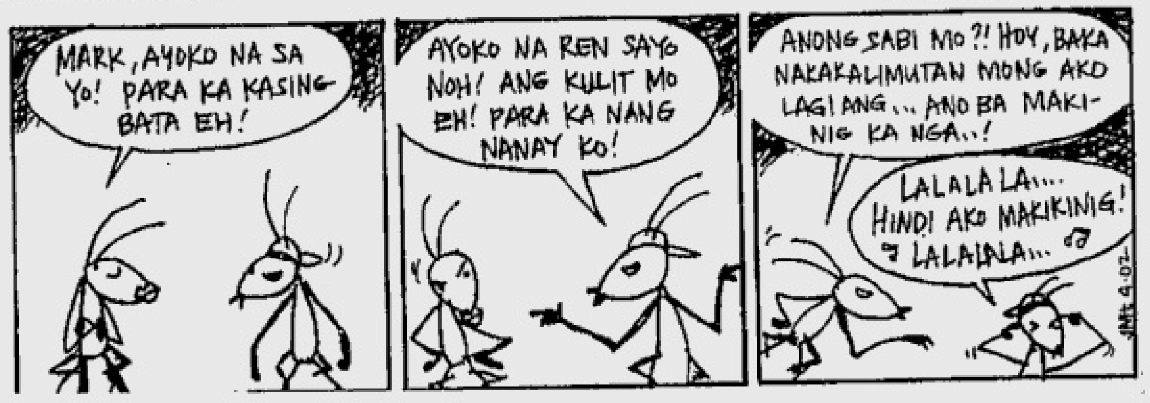
BABY BLUES

BY JERRY SCOTT


LOOK, I CHANGED MY MIND. DON'T TELL ME, OKAY?
REALLY?
YEAH. EVEN IF YOU DO THINK YOU KNOW THE SEX OF THE BABY, JUST KEEP IT TO YOURSELF, CAN YOU DO THAT FOR ME?
SURE.
REALLY?
HOW COULD YOU KEEP A SECRET LIKE THAT FROM YOUR OWN WIFE??

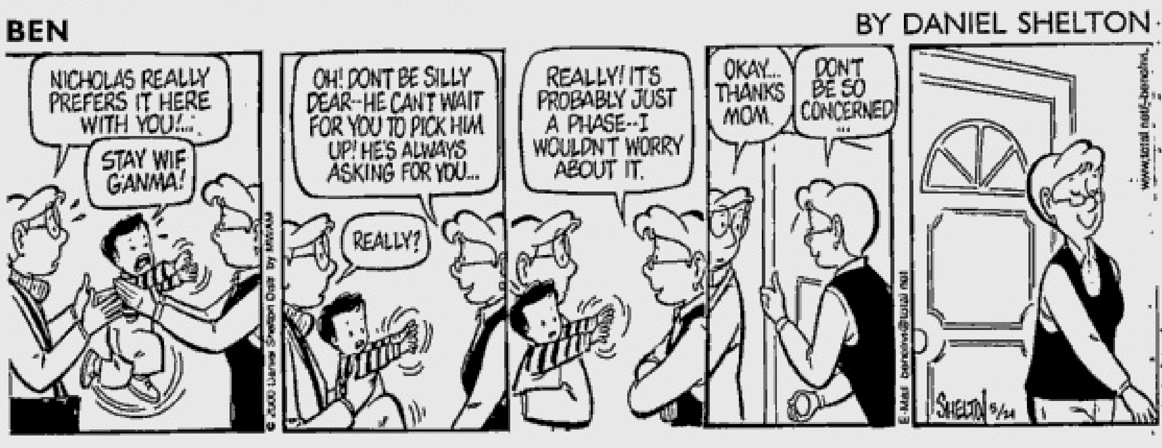
MIKROKOSMOS

BY JOMIKE TEJIDO


MARK, AYOKO NA SA YO! PARA KA KASING BATA EH!
AYOKO NA REN SAYO NOH! ANG KULIT MO EH! PARA KA NANG NANAY KO!
ANONG SABI MO?! HOY, BAKA NAKAKALIMUTAN MONG AKO LAGI ANG... ANO BA MAKINIG KA NGA..!
LALALA LA... HINDI AKO MAKIKINIG! LALALALA...
JMT 4-02

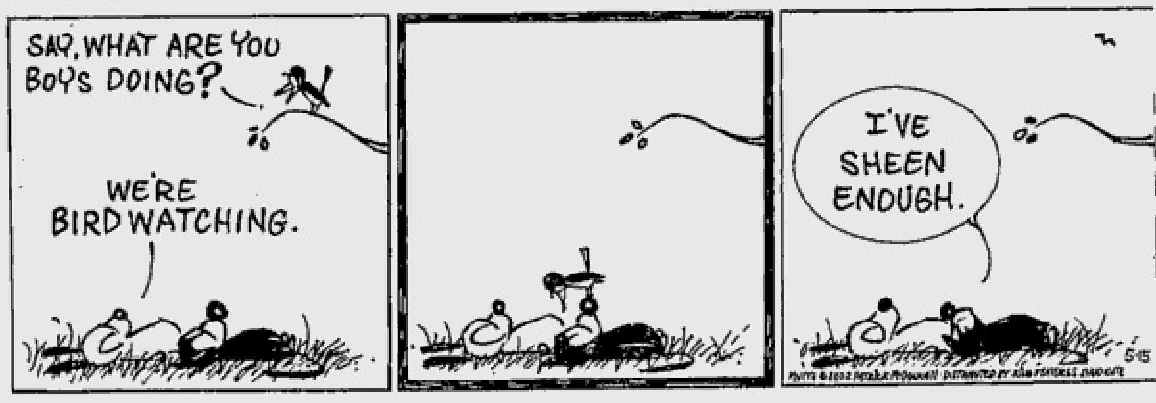
BEN

BY DANIEL SHELTON


NICHOLAS REALLY PREFERS IT HERE WITH YOU!...
STAY WIF GANMA!
OH! DONT BE SILLY DEAR--HE CAN'T WAIT FOR YOU TO PICK HIM UP! HE'S ALWAYS ASKING FOR YOU...
REALLY?
REALLY! IT'S PROBABLY JUST A PHASE--I WOULDN'T WORRY ABOUT IT.
OKAY... THANKS MOM.
DON'T BE SO CONCERNED ...
SHELTON 5/24

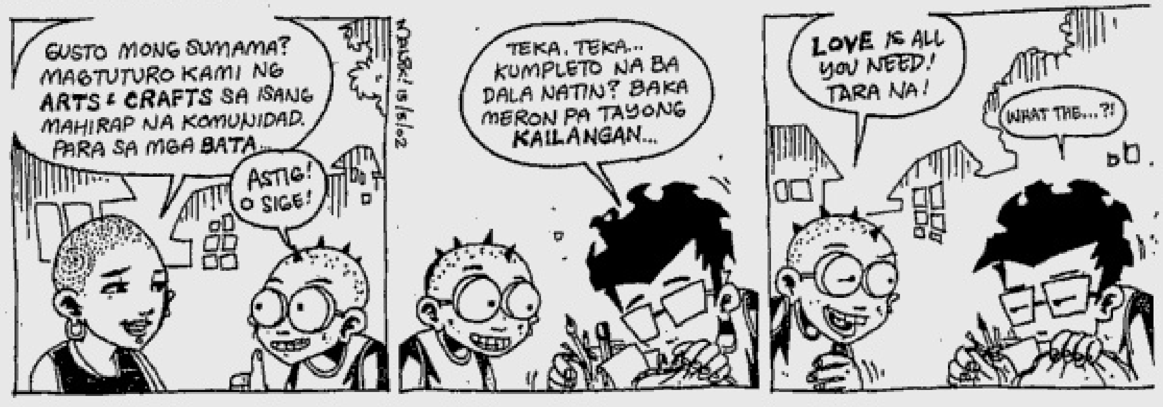
MUTTS

BY PATRICK McDONNELL


SAY, WHAT ARE YOU BOYS DOING?
WE'RE BIRDWATCHING.
I'VE SHEEN ENOUGH.
5-15

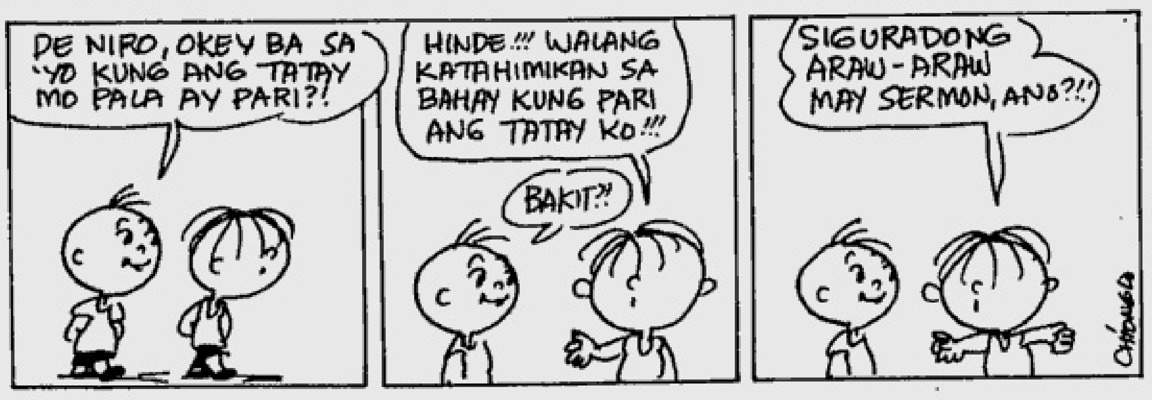
KIKO MACHINE

BY MANIX ABRERA


GUSTO MONG SUMAMA? MAGTUTURO KAMI NG ARTS & CRAFTS SA ISANG MAHIRAP NA KOMUNIDAD. PARA SA MGA BATA...
ASTIG! O SIGE!
15/5/02
TEKA, TEKA... KUMPLETO NA BA DALA NATIN? BAKA MERON PA TAYONG KAILANGAN...
LOVE IS ALL YOU NEED! TARA NA!
WHAT THE...?!

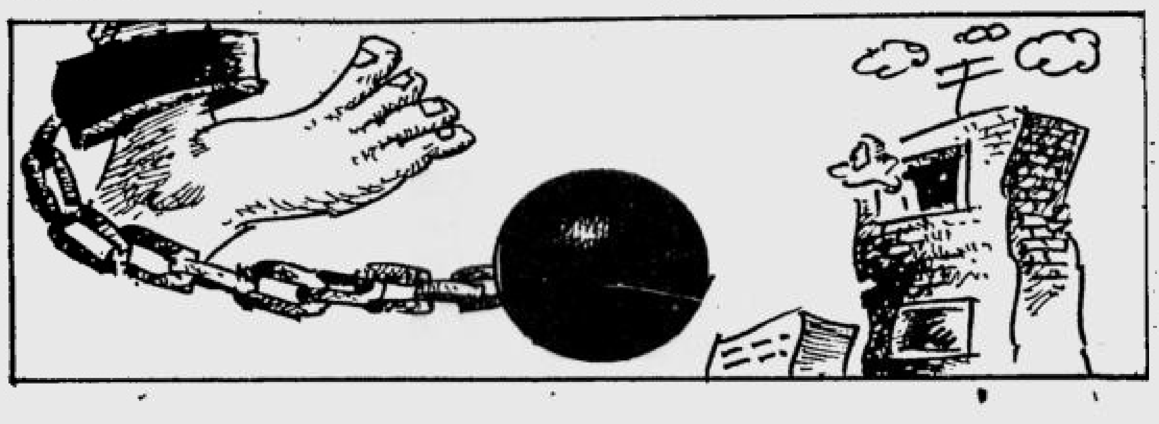
LOVEKNOTS

BY ELIZABETH CHIONGLO


DE NIRO, OKEY BA SA 'YO KUNG ANG TATAY MO PALA AY PARI?!
HINDE!!! WALANG KATAHIMIKAN SA BAHAY KUNG PARI ANG TATAY KO!!!
BAKIT?!
SIGURADONG ARAW-ARAW MAY SERMON, ANO?!!
CHIONGLO

TULDOK

BY PAPU AND TATUM MILAMBILING



HOROSCOPE

BY EUGENIA LAST

CELEBRITIES BORN ON THIS DAY: Anna Maria Alberghetti, Eddy Arnold, Emmitt Smith

Happy Birthday: Social activities will be plentiful this year. Expect your creative abilities to surface. You will be in the mood for love and romance, so plan a special vacation. Use your intuition to get ahead in business. You will be able to shed some light on the situations around you, but don't get in the middle of someone else's dilemma. Your numbers are 8, 14, 22, 26, 33, 39

ARIES (March 21-April 19): You may be overly sensitive today. Do not jump too quickly when it comes to personal issues. Consider putting your energy into making improvements to your home.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20): Consider taking a short trip to visit friends or relatives. If you have not been feeling satisfied regarding your vocation you might want to look into an apprenticeship or going back to school.

GEMINI (May 21-June 20): If you aren't working at a job you like you may want to consider moving on. You should be sending out your resume or applying for a better position within the company .

CANCER (June 21-July 22): You will have a tendency to overreact regarding personal matters today. Pamper yourself and don't let things get to you. Self-improvement projects will be necessary.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22): You may want to keep your ideas to yourself today. The people you normally share with will be difficult to deal with. Focus on love relationships for the time being, not friendships.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22): You need to make special plans with the one you are already involved with, or if you are single, get out and meet and greet. You will attract people who have similar interests if you join an intellectual organization.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22): Don't let anyone you work with bully you into doing their work. You will have a tendency to take on more than you can handle in order to impress others.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 21): The more information you can absorb, the better. Attend conferences or lectures that can provide you with stimulating insight into future trends. This will be a highly creative day.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21): You may find yourself in a position to take care of someone else's personal papers or finances. You may have a little extra money to burn but that doesn't mean that you should take a risk.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19): You may be feeling out of control regarding emotional matters. If someone you like is not receptive, back away and give the person space. Think about what it is you want out of the relationship.

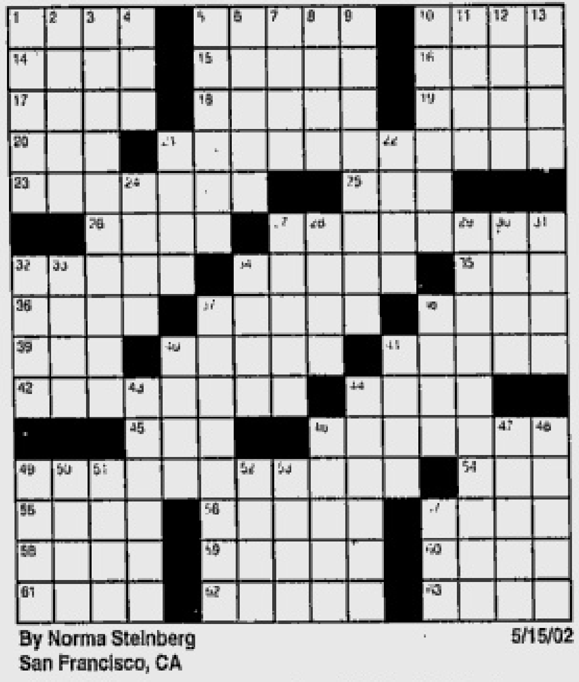
AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18): You can get ahead at work if you are willing to take on more responsibility. Be careful, however, that you aren't being taken advantage of. If you aren't getting the credit you deserve, move on.

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20): You will be dreaming about distant lands so you should make plans to take a trip. Travel will be informative. New friendships or partnerships are likely to unfold.

Birthday Baby: You will express yourself dramatically. You will not tolerate anyone curtailing your freedom. You are a creative thinker and must be allowed to follow your dream.

DAILY CROSSWORD

IMSPuzzles@aol.com



By Norma Steinberg
San Francisco, CA

5/15/02

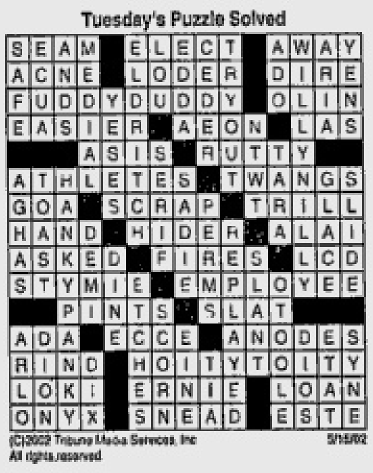
ACROSS

1 Brief note
5 Go in
10 Top-medal metal
14 Surrounded by
15 Laissez ___
16 Swear
17 Fork part
18 Corporations
19 Sitarist Shankar
20 Pampering letters
21 Speed along
23 Visual blight
25 Him in Italy
26 Eh?
27 Baby's game
32 Portly
34 Tumbler
35 Thurman of "Batman & Robin"
36 Country humor
37 Roebuck's partner
38 Give forth
39 Annex
40 Reads a bar code
41 Mil. officers
42 George S. Kaufman's partner
44 Bouquet holder
45 Tiriac of tennis
46 Tear down
49 Pastry choice
54 Fidel's comrade
55 Pealed
56 ___ we all?
57 Light weight
58 Depraved
59 Metric unit
60 Skin opening
61 Sampras or Rose
62 Smart-alecky
63 Bridge

DOWN

1 Flat finish
2 Watson of "Breaking the Waves"
3 Moderate one's speech
4 Yeats offering
5 Exertion
6 Gullible
7 Grow weary
8 Ms. Bombeck
9 Antsy
10 Grateful Dead head
11 Elliptical
12 Pants maker Strauss
13 Dork
21 Castle's protection
22 Puffins and guillemots
24 Eschew
27 Factory
28 I'm all ___!
29 Farmer's success
30 Skip
31 Feedbag food
32 Con game
33 Uproar
34 Toothed wheel
37 Tabloid creations
38 Compass reading
40 Wing-tip or oxford
41 Currency
43 One-base hit
44 Sacristy
46 Has a meal
47 "Butterfield 8" author
48 Country on the Gulf of Aden
49 Private sch.
50 Great review
51 Motel room, e.g.
52 Operatic melody
53 New Jersey team
57 All-purpose MDs

Tuesday's Puzzle Solved



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R	I	N	D		H	O	I	T	Y	T	O	I	T	Y
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Operating Pressure: 125 PSIG
Maximum Distance Pressure: 128 PSIG
460V 3-Phase

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Engine Model HINO-K13C-T
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Model: HP750 WCU
Engine Model 6CTA 8.3
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For inquiries, please call telefax nos.
(02) 520-8051; (02) 882-1338; (02) 882-3902
Mr. Ramon Reyes @ 09797711652 and/or
Mr. Ruben Villaflores @ 09797711608

TRANSPORTATION FOR RENT

CAR LOAN

2% w/oTaking Car 7221021

2% w/oTaking Car 3732083

GENERAL ITEMS FOR SALE

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OVEN, Roller, Kneader Brd Stands, etc. 0916-3597367

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MISCELLANEOUS

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MISCELLANEOUS

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MALE

WANTED TAXI DRIVER 6353503

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MALE/FEMALE

BSEED, BSE, COL. PROF Tel. # 7246756; 9265049

CARE GIVER T5280722

★ MANAGER ★
W/EXPERIENCE IN RECRUITMENT & PLACEMENT FOR LOCAL AND ABROAD 8175511 6944950

★OFC STAFF 18/45 W/WO EXP STARTASAP 9134470 RUBY★

HRD STAFF 0916-4788409

PUBLIC NOTICES

MALE/FEMALE

★Urgent Ofc Staff 18/45 w /wo exp 9137740 EVA ★

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Ofc Adm Staff 9134470 Start asap direct Mr. Jovan

OFFC STAFF 9134470Blanca

Sec 2yr Crs M-F 9117940

Urgent Ofc Staff 18-45 w/w/o exp Start Asap 9134470VINA

GENERAL ITEMS FOR SALE

MISCELLANEOUS

FOR SALE
Brand new & second hand construction & tunneling materials & supplies
- steel fibres & cemextra capsules
- electrical cables
- mining implements
- ventilation fans & ductings
- safety aparatus & gadgets
- other basic construction materials

For inquiries, pls. call telefax nos. (02) 520-8051 / (02) 882-1338 & (02) 882-3902 or Mr. Ruben Villaflores @ 09797711608

FOR SALE
CEMENT SILOS
TOWER CRANES
Call Jho Tel. Nos. 723-8408; 724-6115

PUBLIC NOTICES

AUCTION SALE

NATION Pawnshop, Inc., Poblacion, Meyc. Bulacan will sell all unredeemed pledges of Nov. 2001 on May 20, 2002, 10 am. -Lanuza & Sons - Auctioneer

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Work fr Home w/ Travel 8376066

LEGAL NOTICE

Notice is given that the estate of the late **RAMON DEDEL** was extrajudicially settled by his heirs as per Doc. No. 873 Page No. 176 Book XVIII Series of 2000 before Notary Public Atty. Henry D. Adasa of Manila
(PDI-May 8, 15 & 22, 2002)

PUBLIC NOTICES

NOTICE OF LOSS

Prepaid Consignment Note - ABOITIZ ONE, INC. w/series no. G0821001C-G0821050C & One (1) Pouch w/PCN# G0008511C Transaction entered using above series will not be honored by the company

PERSONAL

PRAYER TO HOLY SPIRIT

Holy Spirit Thou who make me see everything and show me the way to reach my ideal. You who give me the divine gift to forgive and forget the wrong that is done to me and who are in all instances of my life with me. I, in this short dialogue, want to thank you for everything and confirm once more that I never want to be separated from You no matter how great the material desires may be. I want to be with You and my loved ones in Your perpetual glory. Amen.

Person must pray this 3 consecutive days without stating one's wish. After 3rd day Your wish will be granted no matter how difficult it may be.

Promise to publish this soon as your favor has been granted.

PRAYER TO THE HOLY SPIRIT

Holy Spirit thou who make me see everything and show me the way to reach my ideal. You who give me the divine gift to forgive and forget the wrong that is done to me and who are in all instances of my life with me. I, In this short dialogue, want to thank You for everything and confirm once more that I never want to be separated from You, no matter how great the material desires may be. I want to be with You and my loved ones in Your Perpetual Glory. Amen.

REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES
REGIONAL TRIAL COURT
NATIONAL CAPITAL JUDICIAL REGION
BRANCH 25, MANILA

THE MATTER OF CORRECTION OF
ENTRY AS TO THE STATUS OF SEX
MARILETTE C. PIMENTEL,
SP. PROC. NO. 02-103051

MARILETTE C. PIMENTEL,
Petitioner.
x-------------------------------x

ORDER

In her verified petition, petitioner prays among others that after due notice, publication and hearing, judgment be rendered to correct the entry as to petitioner's sex status as erroneously entered in the Certificate of Live Birth as MALE instead of FEMALE.

Finding the petition to be sufficient in form and in substance, let the instant case be set for hearing on May 30, 2002 at 8:30 in the morning, at which date and time, any interested person may appear and show cause, if any, why the petition should not be granted.

Likewise, petitioner is hereby ordered to cause the publication of this order once a week for three (3) consecutive weeks in a newspaper of general publication.

Send copy of this order to the Solicitor General, the City Civil Registrar of the City of Manila, petitioner and counsel.

SO ORDERED.

Manila, Philippines. March 18, 2002.

(Sgd.) AIDA RANGEL ROQUE
Judge

(PDI--May 15, 2002)

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SZOPAD SOCIAL FUND PROJECT AND PROPOSED ARMM SOCIAL FUND FOR PEACE AND DEVELOPMENT PROJECT EXPRESSION OF INTEREST FOR EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

(The Office of the President (OP) & The Office of the Governor of ARMM)

The Government of Philippines (GOP), in the pursuit of its parallel strategy of promoting peace and development in Mindanao, and of promoting expanded autonomy of the ARMM, together with the Regional Government of ARMM, is currently finalizing the preparation and processing of a proposed ARMM Social Fund for Peace and Development (ASFPD) Project. The World Bank has been requested to finance the project (and possibly other donor(s)). The on-going SZOPAD Social Fund Project is being funded by the OPEC Fund and the World Bank, and is in the final year of implementation. The proposed ASFPD Project, to be implemented over a 5 year period, aims to help build peace and reduce poverty in conflict-affected and conflict-influenced communities in the ARMM Region. The main focus of the project is to support community-driven development approaches and to strengthen institutional capacities and governance in the ARMM region, working in close collaboration with on-going programs.

Based on a transparent and competitive selection process, the OP and the ARMM Government are seeking a competent candidate to be appointed by President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo to the position of Executive Director of the Fund Management Office (FMO). He/she would be the ED of the SZOPAD Social Fund Project in its transition towards the proposed successor program - the ASFPD Project -- and would manage the ASFPD Project once becoming operational (currently to be launched in Jan. 2003, with the transition during 2002). The FMO is a semi-autonomous agency in the Office of the President, under the overall direction of a high level Board of Directors appointed by the President.

The main functions of the new Executive Director will include: (i) providing overall management of the on-going SZOPAD Social Fund Project, which is fast tracking the implementation of community-based subprojects in the former SZOPAD area; (ii) leading the transition of the SZOPAD Fund Management Office (FMO) from the present staffing structure to the proposed ASFPD Project organizational and staffing structure (currently being finalized); (iii) providing overall management for the pilot phase of the proposed ASFPD Project, currently scheduled to be launched by mid-2002; (iv) becoming the Executive Director of the ASFPD Project, once approved and operational.

A copy of the detailed terms of reference (TOR) for this position can be obtained by contacting the office of the ARMM Executive Secretary Nabil Tan (Office of the ARMM Regional Government, ARMM Complex, Cotabato City, tel. 064-421-1224/25 or ARMM Manila Liaison Office, RCI Building, 5th floor, Legaspi Village, Makati, tel. 02-814-0612).

Qualified candidates are requested to submit their expression of interest to the above office, Attention of Executive Secretary Tan, and include the following items: letter stating interest in the position and providing a concise summary of the main reasons why the candidate presumes to be qualified for the position; a detailed curriculum vitae, a birth certificate, copies of education degree(s), and 3 employment/professional references (with contact information). This information must be received not later than May 22, 2002.

The candidates will be screened based on selection criteria, and a short list of candidates will be interviewed by a panel comprised of the OP and the ARMM. The panel will rank them according to the following primary criteria:

(i) Relevant experience in managing and coordinating complex and multisectoral projects, involving multiple stakeholders; Mindanao experience is essential;

(ii) Effectiveness in leading multi-sectoral teams and strong leadership skills;

(iii) Relevant educational background and technical skills (including computer literacy);

Up to six of the highest ranked candidates will be requested to participate in an interview by the same panel which will assess the information in the application and rank them based upon their application. The three highest ranked candidates will be presented for final decision to the Office of the President for final appointment.

Candidates are requested to submit their application and supporting information not later than May 22, 2002. The terms of the consultancy contract will be renewable yearly, subject to performance, with an attractive remuneration package consistent with "market-based rates" for Loan Projects in Mindanao.

Republic of the Philippines
DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION & COMMUNICATIONS
METROSTAR EXPRESS

INVITATION TO BID

The DOTC-MRT 3 Bids and Awards Committee invites all interested bidders/suppliers to prequalify and bid for the supply and delivery of LIGHT RAIL VEHICLE HAND STRAPS for the MRT 3 with a total approved budget amounting to Php 555,000.00.

Accreditation requirements can be obtained upon payment of non-refundable fee of P100.00 to the Administrative Division, DOTC-MRT 3 Depot, North Avenue cor. EDSA, North Triangle Area, Quezon City. Submission of duly accomplished and notarized prequalification documents shall not be later than 5:00 P.M., 28th May 2002. Accredited/prequalified bidders/suppliers need not apply.

Bid documents and complete specifications are available for issuance upon payment of P500.00, which is not refundable and upon presentation of Notice of Invitation and Certificate of Accreditation.

The DOTC-MRT 3 reserves the right to reject any or all of the bids proposals without offering any reasons, waive any informality therein and make an award to the bidder whose proposal is most advantageous to the government. This office, likewise, assumes no obligation for whatever losses that may be incurred by the bidders in the preparation of the bids nor does it guarantee that an award shall be made.

(Sgd.) **MARIO C. MIRANDA**
Acting General Manager
Metrostar Express, and
Chairman, PBAC

(PDI--May 15, 17 & 19, 2002)

Republic of the Philippines
PROVINCE OF CAGAYAN
Tuguegarao City
OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

INVITATION TO PRE-QUALIFY AND TO BID

The Provincial Government of Cagayan, through the Provincial Bids and Awards Committee, invites all interested parties to prequalify and to submit bid proposals for the supply and delivery of fifteen (15) units different kinds of vehicle to the Provincial Government of Cagayan, intended for CAR ACQUISITION PLAN.

ITEM NO.	QTY.	UNIT	PARTICULAR/MODEL
1.	-4-	unit	TOYOTA VAN HI-ACE GRANDIA (MODEL 1998 or later)
2.	-1-	unit	TOYOTA VAN (latest model/4x4)
3.	-1-	unit	HYUNDAI STAREX (MODEL 1999-2000)
4.	-4-	unit	TOYOTA PICK-UP (Model 1998 or later)
5.	-1-	unit	ISUZU PICK-UP (FUEGO) Model 1998 or later
6.	-1-	unit	NISSAN PICK-UP (FRONTIER) Model 1998 or later
7.	-1-	unit	TOYOTA PICK-UP, SURPLUS (IMPORTED 1992)
8.	-1-	unit	NISSAN TERRANO (4X4) EXECUTIVE SERIES 1998 or later
9.	-1-	unit	TOYOTA REVO DLX GAS (1999 Model, second hand, color green)

Specification and bid forms may be secured from the General Services Office, Capitol Hills, Tuguegarao City, Cagayan, from **May 15 to 21, 2002**, upon payment of a non-refundable deposit of Five Hundred Pesos (P500.00).

Interested bidders should be pre-qualified. A pre-bid meeting will be held at **9:30 AM** at the Governor's Office Conference Room, Tuguegarao City, Cagayan to thresh out some important aspects of the bidding.

Sealed bid proposals must be submitted to the Provincial Bids and Awards Committee not later than **9:30 AM** on **May 28** and publicly opened at **9:30 AM**. At the same date and address.

The Provincial Government reserves the right to reject any and/or all bids, waive any defects or formalities therein and accept the offer most advantageous to the Provincial Government.

(Sgd.) **EDGAR RAMONES LARA**
Governor
Chairman, Provincial Committee on Bids & Awards

(PDI – May 14, 15 & 16, 2002)

HEALTHCONTACT

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We are seeking **HEALTH REPRESENTATIVES** for our state-of-the-art call center located in Manila to conduct inbound and outbound calls to patients located in the US (and all over the world) for: *Triaging, Counseling, Providing health information, Health teaching, Phone Assessment.*

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Announcement of Vacant Positions

1 NUTRITION OFFICER II - SG-14; Item No. NNCB-NUT02-6-1998; BS degree relevant to the job; 1 year relevant experience; 4 hours relevant training; 2nd level CS eligibility.

For further information, please contact Mr. Benjamin C. Formento, Human Resources Management Officer III, Personnel Section, Administrative Division, tel. no. 892-8575.

(Sgd.) **CAROLINA BAUTISTA-BATALLONES**
Deputy Executive Director

NOTICE OF LOSS

This is to notify the public that
STOCK CERTIFICATE NO. 00022408
covering 208,228 shares owned by
Ma. Rosario Ahorro has been issued and
declared lost on January 21, 2002.
All transactions covered by this document
from said date shall not be honored by

SUN LIFE OF CANADA PROSPERITY BOND FUND, INC.

For more information, please call or see us
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- ☑ Must be experienced in nail art, using acrylic/gel products as well as nail extensions
- ☑ Experiences in spa treatment for hands and feet using new treatment procedures and in Reflexology treatment.

If interested, apply personally to the above address with your passport (if any) certificates of employment, photos and diploma/certificates.

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This ad is approved by POEA

POSTPONEMENT OF ANNUAL STOCKHOLDERS' MEETING

Please be notified that the Annual Stockholders' Meeting of LVN PICTURES, INC. set on Friday, May 17, 2002, is postponed to June 6, 2002, at 3:00 p.m. to be held at 35 Doña Juana Rodriguez, corner 9th Street, New Manila, Quezon City, because the External Auditor has yet to complete its Financial reports.

(Sgd.) **Olympio G. Bermudez**
Corporate Secretary

(PDI--May 15, 2002)

Republic of the Philippines
Province of Laguna
Municipality of Biñan
PREQUALIFICATION, BIDS AND AWARDS COMMITTEE

INVITATION TO PREQUALIFY AND BID

The Municipality of Biñan will conduct a prequalification of prospective contractors for the **Construction of a 50-bed Ospital ng Biñan located at the National Highway, Canlalay, Biñan, Laguna** as per scope of work, specifications, plan and detailed drawings.

Details may be obtained from the Office of the PBAC Secretariat/Office of the MPDC, Municipal Building, Poblacion, Biñan, Laguna, with Tel. No. **(049) 511-3523.**

For prequalification purposes, interested bidders/contractors must submit proofs showing that they comply with the following requirements:

1) Contractor should be a general contractor with PCAB accreditation of at least Triple A category level;
2) Contractor should have at least five (5) years experience as building contractor and a track record on construction of institutional projects requiring excellent workmanship on first class hospitals and other public buildings;
3) Contractor should submit a list of completed projects indicating project cost and nature of work undertaken;
4) Name of company/business address, telephone/fax number and year of incorporation/year business was established. List of other documents required is available at the Office of the PBAC Secretariat.

The above-requirements shall be submitted to the Office of the PBAC Secretariat/Office of the MPDC, Municipal Building, Poblacion, Biñan, Laguna not later than **May 24, 2002.**

Only those who comply with the above requirements and are prequalified by the PBAC will be invited to participate in the actual bidding which will be conducted on a later date to be advised to prequalification bidders. The two-envelope system shall be adopted in the bidding.

The PBAC reserves the right to reject any of the bidders to waive informality in the bids received or to accept such bids which is considered most advantageous to the government.

(Sgd.) **HERMIS C. PEREZ**
Municipal Mayor/PBAC Chairman

(PDI - May 1, 8 & 15, 2002)

Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas
MAYNILA, PILIPINAS
ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES DEPARTMENT

INVITATION TO BID

The Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas (BSP) will conduct bidding on May 29, 2002 at 10:00 A.M. for the following:

Qty	Unit	Item and Specifications
-200-	rolls	Centerfolded Plastic Film, Polyolefin type. Size: 12"W x 1332 meters L x 15-17 microns.

Subject to the submission of photocopies of the following documents (original of items 1 and 2 to be presented for authentication purposes), bid documents may be obtained from the Manager I, Procurement Division III, Administrative Services Department, Rm. 212, 2nd Floor, 5-Storey Bldg., BSP Complex, A. Mabini cor. Pablo Ocampo Sr. Streets, Malate, Manila, Tel. Nos. 523-2875/524-8718:

1. Articles of Incorporation and Business Registration Papers;
2. Business Licenses/Permits;
3. Year 2001 duly Audited Financial Statements (Balance sheet and Income Statement);
4. Year 2001 Income Tax Returns;
5. Company History/profile; and
6. List of local clients (complete with their addresses and telephone/fax numbers).

Only those who submit/comply with the above requirements will be allowed to participate in the bidding. The two (2) envelope system shall be adopted in the bidding.

The BSP hereby reserves the right to reject any or all bids, as well as to waive any defect in such bids, and to accept such bids as may be considered most advantageous to the Bank.

(Sgd.) **EDUARDO L. MAGAHIS**
Director

(PDI--May 15, 2002)

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PAMBANSANG PANGASIWAAN SA PAGKAIN
NATIONAL FOOD AUTHORITY
Quezon City

NOTICE OF SUGAR RE-BIDDING

The National Food Authority (NFA) hereby announces that the sealed Sale Through Market Determined Pricing (SMDP) for maximum 500,000 Lkg. NFA refined sugar conducted last May 9, 2002 was declared a bidding failure.

In view thereof, the re-bidding will push through on **May 15, 2002** at 10:00 AM instead of 2:00 PM as previously published to be held on the same venue, NFA Central Office, Boardroom, 10/F, 101 Matimyas Bldg. E. Rodriguez Sr. Avenue, Quezon City.

The Terms and Conditions for the said bidding can be secured by all interested bidders at the Directorate for Marketing Operations (Operation Coordination Division), 5th floor, 101 Matimyas Bldg., E. Rodriguez Sr., Avenue, Quezon City.

(Sgd.) **VICENTE V. RACHO**
Assistant Administrator &
Chairman, PBAC Sugar

(PDI--May 15, 2002)

INQUIRER
TRiViA
By BONG BARRAMEDA

First Vandals

A wilful destroyer of property is called a vandal after the Germanic tribe of Vandals, who invaded and dominated the western Mediterranean in the 5th century A.D. Under their ambitious king Genseric, an army of 80,000 Vandals recklessly plundered Rome in 455. Genseric's son, Hunneric, who succeeded him in 477, was even more ferocious but attacked mainly Christians, stealing the treasures and sacred vessels of the Church. The Vandals were finally conquered in 536 and vanished without a trace, but their name lives on.

Ooops! *Graffiti* is the English word for those inscriptions, slogans, or drawings scratched or scribbled on a wall, etc. in a public place, often toilets. *Graffiti* is a plural noun; the singular is *graffito.* Hence, to say, "Graffiti is the most common form of juvenile vandalism" is incorrect. Incidentally, officials of ancient Rome had an effectively way of discouraging citizens from scrawling graffiti in public toilets. They painted pictures and symbols of the gods on the walls, making their defacement not merely a civil but religious offense punishable by death.

Past Forward. This day in 1930: Ellen Church, a registered nurse, became the world's first stewardess, taking care of 11 passengers in a Boeing Transport (later to become United Airlines) flight from Oakland, California, to Cheyenne, Wyoming. In Europe, the first stewardess was Nelly Diener, a Swiss woman hired by Swissair in 1934. In 1919, at the beginning of commercial aviation, it was often the radio operators who served drinks or picnic-style meals. It was not until 1927 that the first stewards started to appear on British Imperial Airways airplanes.

WORD WATCH

KLM : acronym for Koninklijke Luchvaart Maatschappij - Royal Dutch Airlines.

PDI – May 15, 2002

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Day before publication

Our Dearly Beloved

CAPT SANTOS P PANCIPANE PN (GSC) RET

Peacefully joined our Lord on May 13, 2002
at the age of 67.

His loving wife **Baning**; children **Allan & Malou, Sally & Rey, Sophia & Alpher, Santos Jr.**; grandchildren **Andrea, Irish, Paulo, Lester, Dennis, Cheska, Allen Dave** request the pious readers to pray for the eternal repose of his soul.

His remains lie in state at Areflor Funeral Homes, Zero Street, J.P. Rizal Extension, West Rembo, Makati City.

Interment will be on Saturday, May 18, 2002, 12 noon at Garden of Memories, Pateros, Metro Manila.

PROVIDENCIA "DAISY" VALENCIA DIZON

January 5, 1941 - May 13, 2002

Her husband **Nestor**; children **Dennis & Leng, Jon & Lei, Jennel** and **Jay**; brother and sisters **Menen & Glo, Mel & Willy** and **Frida**; mother-in-law **Zon**; grandchildren, nephews and nieces request the pious readers to say a little prayer for the repose of her soul.

Her remains lie in state at the Good Shepherd Cemetery, City of San Fernando, Pampanga.

Interment will be on Thursday, May 16, 2002 at the Genuino Mausoleum, Pasig, Candaba, after the 9:00 AM Mass at the Good Shepherd Cemetery.

Our Dearly Beloved

LILIA BACONGA FRIAS Vda. De CASCON

Peacefully joined her Creator
on 12 May 2002 at the age of 79.

Her loving children **Hirah, Ira, Rachel & Eddie Sanchez, Adonis & Rica, Hygeia & Lino Calaor, Yadana & June Elumir**, grandchildren, sisters, brothers, in-laws and relatives request the pious readers to pray for her eternal repose.

Her body lies in state at the United Church of Christ in the Philippines, Marcos Ave. cor. Julio Pacana St., Cagayan de Oro City.

Interment will be on 17 May 2002, Friday at the Good Shepherd Memorial Gardens, Cagayan de Oro City after the 7:30 AM services.

"I am the resurrection and the life, He who believes in Me will live, even though he dies; and whoever believes in Me will never die."
John 11:25-26

NEMESIA ROMULO VILLATUYA

of Luisiana, Laguna

Peacefully joined her Creator on May 11, 2002
at the age of 90.

Her bereaved children **Evelina & Avelino Magturo, Thelma Villatuya** (†), and **Roger Villatuya**; grandchildren, great grandchildren and all her relatives request the pious readers to pray for the eternal repose of her soul.

Her remains lie in state at La Funeraria Paz, G. Araneta Avenue, Quezon City.

Interment will be on Saturday, May 18, 2002 at the Holy Cross Memorial Park, Novaliches, Quezon City after the 8:00 AM Mass at La Funeraria Paz Chapel.

The St. Luke's Heart Institute Alumni Association

condole with the family of

FRANKLIN G. AVELLANEDA, M.D.

who passed away in the Grace of our Lord
on May 12, 2002 at the age of 46.

His remains lie in state at the Arlington Memorial Chapels, 12 G. Araneta Avenue, Quezon City.

Interment will be on Saturday, May 18, 2002 at the Loyola Memorial Park, Marikina at 2:00 PM.

His loving mother **AURELIA**; brothers **FLORENCIO, FREDERICK, FARLEY, FIDELINO**; sisters **NORMA, LORNA**; and other loved ones request relatives and friends to pray for his eternal rest.

Patria Bartolabac Butalid

Peacefully joined her Creator on May 13, 2002
at the age of 76.

Her loving husband **Ricardo Bakunawa Butalid**; children **Marife Zamora, Ricardo Jr. & Annie, Rainier & Pilar, Marissa & Gil Cortes, Maricar, Maritess & Emie Zason** and **Ryan & Armin**; grandchildren **Ian, Tina, Raisa, Patrick, Bianca, Adrian, Philip, Giane** and **Gillian**; brother **Jorge** (†); sisters **Encarnacion Barsaga** (†), **Josefa Villamor** (†), **Leona Almodal** (†), **Corazon** and **Elisa Fidel**; other relatives and friends request the pious readers to pray for the eternal repose of her soul.

Her remains lie in state at the Nacional Memorial Homes, Araneta Avenue, Quezon City.

She will be laid to rest at the Heritage Park, Fort Bonifacio, Taguig, Metro Manila, after the 8:00 AM Mass on Saturday at Chapel 3C, Nacional Memorial Homes.

ROSARIO "CHARITO" SARTE ZAPANTA

peacefully joined her Creator
on May 13, 2002

and rejoined her husband, **Dr. Jose A. Zapanta**, daughter, **Rosario Zita**; parents, **Judge Clemente Sarte Sr.** and **Sra. Doña Rosario Florin de Sarte**; brothers and sisters, **Narciso, Jose Augusto, Nenita** (**Sr. M. Mercedes, OSB**), and **Esperancita**.

Her bereaved daughters, **Dr. Erleen Agnes** and **Marilou Teresita** (**Nenette**), son **Ricardo Jose II** (**Nonoy**); grandchildren **Joanne Jauclan Ching Tan, Gerard, Gerry Jr., Gerryleen, Kathleen** and **Earl Jauclan, Ana** and **Paola Zapanta**, and **Samantha Lee**; great-grandchildren **Earl, Claudine** and **Ashley Ching Tan**; children-in-law **Mayor Gerry R. Jauclan, Samuel Z. Lee** and **Michie Ribaya Zapanta**; sisters and brother, **Luz Rizalina** (**Ritzi**), **Atty. Clemente Jr., Pilarica Verga, Cielo Adelina Salceda** and **Teresita** (**Sr. Mary Clement, SPC**); sisters- and brother-in-law **Angelina Z. Flores, Dolores Z. Rivera, Angelita Lizardo Sarte** and **Mayor Jesus Salceda Sr.**; request relatives and friends to remember Charito in their prayers.

Her mortal remains lie in state at the Zapanta residence, Basud, Polangui, Albay. Interment will be on Saturday, May 18, 2002, at the Zapanta Mausoleum, Polangui Catholic Cemetery after the 2:00 p.m. funeral Mass at the Sts. Peter and Paul Parish Church, Polangui, Albay.

For the needs of your departed Loved Ones, the following establishments can help you.

ARLINGTON MEMORIAL CHAPEL
12 G. Araneta Avenue, Quezon City; Tels. 715-1025; 715-1031; 715-1027
ARLINGTON EAST THE GARDEN CHAPELS
C. Raymundo St. cor. Mercedes Ave., San Miguel Ave., Pasig City; Tels. 747-8599; 747-8609 • Telefax 641-1760
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243 A.B. Fernandez Ave., Dagupan City, Pangasinan; Tels. (0785) 522-3451; 522-2128; (0917) 434-9976
CAPITOL MEMORIAL CHAPELS INC.
1305 G. Araneta Avenue, Quezon City; Tel. 732-0309; 732-1085
CEBU ROLLING HILLS MEMORIAL CHAPELS INC.
Cebu Branch A.S. Fortuna Street, Banilad, Mandaue City, Cebu; Tels. 346-2543; 346-2601
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FLORESCO FUNERAL HOME
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FUNERARIA ANGEL QUIOGUE
No. 87 [illegible]
M. Almeda St., Pateros, Metro Manila; Tels. 642-3010; 633-3602
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187 Real St., Zapote Alabang, Las Piñas; Tels. 873-0507; 873-0024
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865 J.P. Rizal St., Poblacion, Makati City; Tels. 890-3556; 899-6191
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FUNERARIA SAMSON
145 Bayan Luma, Imus, Cavite; Tels. (046) 471-3375; 471-2675
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Calasdang Bago, Pateros, Metro Manila; Tels. 642-6181 to 82

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149 G. Araneta Ave. cor. Kaliraya St., Quezon City; Tels. 740-3906 to 11; 712-3001, 743-6502 or 06
LA FUNERARIA PAZ, INC.
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EDSA cor. Bernardino St., Guadalupe, Makati City, Tels. 895-1011 to 19
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East Greenhills, Mandaluyong City, Telefax 724-4139, 725-2044
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Magallanes Village, Makati City, Tels. 852-8228, 852-7284
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WELINGTON FUNERAL SERVICES
1511 Gen. Luna St., Paco, Manila; Tels. 522-8846, 522-9438, 400-5394

FELIZARDA EVANGELISTA QUINTANS

Cabiao, Nueva Ecija & Life Homes,
Rosario, Pasig

Peacefully joined her Creator
on May 12, 2002 at the age of 79.

Her remains lie in state at her residence at #39 Pres. Osmeña, Life Homes Subdivision, Rosario, Pasig City.

Interment will be on Saturday, May 18, 2002 at the Loyola Memorial Park, Marikina City at 10:00 AM.

"...absent with the body to be present with the Lord" 2 Corinthians 5:8

e-mail: peopleatwork@inquirer.com.ph.
PEOPLE at WORK
Editor Raul O. Marcelo ◎ Subsection Editor Regina Galang Reyes

Outplacement: a way to turn terminations into beginnings

By Rochelle Leonor

RESTRUCTURING, reorganization, retrenchment. These terms may mean letting employees go. Retrenchment is not easy for all parties concerned. For those who receive their walking papers, they experience emotions associated with grief. For employees who remain with the company, they may feel uncertainty. For management, they are troubled with legal, public relations and business concerns.

But in today's business setting, reorganization is a common thing. Not only does it reduce costs, reorganization makes companies more responsive to the needs and opportunities of the marketplace. Plus, done correctly, it increases productivity.

Last resort

Agilent Technologies, a carved-out company of Hewlett Packard, was one of the many companies who cut back on their workforce last year. Worldwide, Agilent had to let go of 8,000 people, including 10 in its Manila office. According to Joan Tuma-ob, HR consultant of Agilent, the company enforced other measures first before retrenching. "We imposed forced timeouts and mandatory pay cuts for all managers, which eventually trickled down to the rank-and-file. Finally, we had to resort to letting go of some people," says Tuma-ob.

Jasmine Miraflores, Agilent's marketing specialist, and Patrick Quion, Channel Partner for South Asia were among those who were laid off. Quion's regional manager called him for a meeting and told him about the workforce reduction program. He was included in the program. "I was in a state of denial when they told me," says Quion. "I asked myself what future lies ahead since I have a family to raise." Miraflores had the same sentiments. "I was scared because I didn't know what would happen next. I had many friends in the office and it was hard to accept that I would leave them behind."

Studies show that an employee goes through varied emotions when he knows he's being laid off. At first, there is anger and shock over the situation. Then, he goes through denial, convincing himself that things are not happening. Then, there is relief, especially for those who don't like their working conditions, followed by acceptance. Miraflores says, "Immediately after I received the news, I went to see a movie."

Career transition

Concerned for the Agilent employees, the company wanted to make the retrenchment as painless as possible. Tuma-ob maintains that the workforce reduction was hard for her and the company since most of the retrenched employees had been working for Agilent for many years. Quion was one of the pioneers.

"We had to make sure that all their documents were prepared a month ahead," says Tuma-ob. Aside from the usual remuneration packages, Agilent wanted to make sure that their employees would be able to make a career transition. They engaged the services of Drake Beam Morin to assist the 10 employees, a process called outplacement.

Outplacement is defined as a structured approach toward a job search for employees who have been displaced. According to Mario Gatus, president of Drake Beam Morin Philippines, Inc., outplacement is usually conducted on behalf of the company making the change. "Outplacement helps these employees move on with their lives," adds Gatus.

Strategic solutions

Drake Beam Morin is an outplacement firm, which provides strategic solutions to help organizations align their workforces and meet changing business needs. Drake and Beam started DBM in 1967 and Morin was their business partner. Drake and Beam were psychologists, who believed that there is a way of helping people who lose their jobs. They started the concept of outplacement, which is now an accepted way of helping people make their career transitions.

DBM put up its Manila office last August 2001. "We want to foster a culture of care here in the country," says Vicente Kilayko, DBM Philippines director. "We help companies look after their retrenched employees."

Cynthia Sabado, a consultant of DBM, was assigned to handle Agilent employees. "First, I discussed the DBM process. Since they believed that we could help them, they signed up," says Sabado. Outplacement in DBM is not mandatory.

Process

Then, the candidates, as DBM calls them, undergo three phases of evaluation. The first step is the assessment, where the candidates determine what are their motivations and job values. They also undergo a series of tests to assess and review their careers and future needs. "From there, they get a summary of what career track they want," Sabado explains. During this stage, Quion found out that he still wants to remain in the same industry. The same was true with Miraflores.

The next phase is preparation. In this stage, the candidates learn how to effectively write their resumés and prepare for job interviews. They study job-search techniques. Candidates establish networking ties, surf the Internet for job openings, and contact headhunters. It was at this stage that Sabado discovered that Miraflores and Quion were already prepared to take on managerial tasks. "The assessments showed that Agilent had trained them well. Their skills were not only for staff positions," explains Sabado.

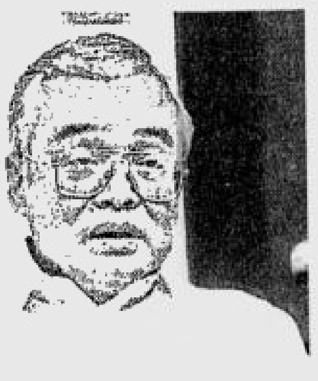
In this phase, they were assisted in improving their communication skills. DBM lends their audio-visual facilities so candidates can record themselves while they practice answering interview questions. From the tapes, they can see how they can avoid mannerisms and improve their speaking skills. "We were given the usual interview questions and I taped myself as I answered the questions," says Miraflores. "After I reviewed the tapes, I realized that I still have a lot of improvement to do."

The last phase is managing the campaign. This is time when the candidates analyze job offers and negotiate compensation. "You have to think which job offer will benefit and develop you the most. You just don't accept the first job that comes along," says Kilayko. DBM also provides facilities for the candidates' use. Computers, Internet access and facsimiles are available. Candidates can come in anytime to use these facilities.

Sensitivity at work

For the two retrenched Agilent employees, the DBM experience helped them significantly. Both Quion and Miraflores took only a month before they got new jobs. Quion is now the country manager for Acterna Asia Pacific Pty. Ltd. Miraflores is marketing executive for Global Sources, a job opening she got from a job site. Agilent is also satisfied with DBM's assistance to their former employees.

The experiences of the retrenched Agilent employees show that concerned companies can implement terminations with sensitivity. Outplacement can ease the stress and trauma of termination for the affected employees. At the same time, it helps maintain morale of the remaining staff. The company's public image is also enhanced since it conveys that the company cares for its people. It simply shows care and concern at work in the workplace.


GATUS, DBM president

MIRAFLORES, former Agilent employees

TUMA-OB, Agilent HR consultant

KILAYKO, DBM director

QUION, former Agilent employee

SABADO, DBM consultant

PHOTOS BY JIM GUIAO PUNZALAN

Retrenched manager loses hope in finding job

Resume
Resume
ALBERT RODRIGUEZ

By Tita Datu Puangco

I WAS retrenched in October of last year. I worked as the Department Manager of a consumer wholesale store here in Cebu. I lost count of the resumes I sent out. Only one company was interested and after one phone interview, I didn't get further feedback. I am on my fourth month of unemployment, a misfortune totally alien to me until now. May I get some pep talk from you? Honestly, I have lost a considerable amount of my confidence. I am close to going over the deep bend.

Retrenched Department Manager

Let me start by apologizing for not being able to respond to your letter at once. Every week, I have time to respond to only one letter. First, let us look at the difference between having work and having a job. The right to work is a basic human right. Work fulfills us; it allows us to use and multiply our talents. Man is incomplete if he/she does not work.

Work allows us to address many of our needs—basic needs like food and shelter as well as higher level needs such as our social and self-actualization needs.

Mindset change

However, work is not the same as holding a job or being employed. In this age of globalization where our external environment looks like a turbulent river, job security is a dream in most companies. In the sixties, new university graduates wanted to get hired by large corporations because they could offer lifetime job security. Today, their employee populations have shrunk and retrenchment has become a regular and routine practice.

In this scenario, I suggest that you seek work, not a job. I read somewhere that in the animal kingdom, only *homo sapiens* or man experiences the phenomenon of being out of work. But if we seek work, we will find work.

Move out of the mindset of simply looking for a job. Take an inventory of all the skills and competencies you have gained working as a department manager. Write down all the contacts and network you have gained. Then, expand your horizon.

Job creation

Work can mean becoming an entrepreneur, starting a small business of your own. Work can mean becoming self-employed, using your skills as a consultant or adviser in your areas of expertise. You may even double or triple your earnings.

I have a client friend who one day found himself out of a job.

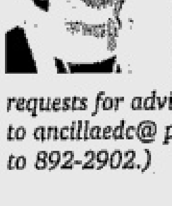
Advice
FOR THE
ANXIOUS PERSON
AT WORK

Armed only with his directory of contacts and through the help of two of these friends, he founded his first fast food store. He was able to make it grow to over a hundred stores. Later, he turned around and sold it amassing a fortune. Now, he is actively developing yet another business.

If you can't find a job, create one. If your competency is needed by a set of customers, then you can be self-employed. One young guy I know is good in martial arts. His friends would come to his house to learn from him. Then, they started paying him for coaching them. Now, he has close to 20 clients. He earns in a month more than what a regular office worker earns. He works eight hours in a week (two hours a day). At the same time, he continues to pursue his college degree.

The small entrepreneur and the self-employed continue to keep our economy humming. Entrepreneurs, more than the big companies who shed jobs, create more jobs.

Don't lose hope. Losing your job but finding fulfilling work may just be the blessing you are hoping for. God bless you.



(Ms Puangco is CEO and president of Ancilla Enterprise Development Consulting. Send comments, feedback or requests for advice through e-mail to ancillaedc@ pacific.net.ph or fax to 892-2902.)

Learning lunches feed the mind

WORKING MOM
An Mercado Alcantara

WE know it's lunchtime when the spicy smell of instant noodles wafts into our cubicles. In this era of multi-tasking and overtime work, the instant noodles make it possible to go through lunch without really stopping. We let our meetings run all over the lunch hour or scramble to finish our paperwork because we can eat right at our desks.

But for some of those seeking a better work-life balance, lunch hour is precious time. It is a time to recharge and replenish, not only our bodies but most especially our minds and spirit.

Ayala Foundation's The Work-Life Project recently offered a series of lunch-hour feed-your-stomach-and-your-mind sessions which they called "brown bag discussions" or "bring your own *baon*" (BYOB) groups. An elevation of the humble lunch hour, the sessions were designed to give workers a break from their daily grind. It also elevated the humble lunch hour by turning lunch groups into learning groups—what would otherwise have been spent in gossip was spent in enriching discussions.

Brown bag project

The Ayala Foundation's "bring your own *baon*" groups were held for three-consecutive weeks at the Filipinas Heritage Library, a central meeting point for those working in the Makati Business District. Invited to lead the discussions were family counselors Maribel Dionisio and Alex Mallari. They talked about how to build a respectful yet loving relationship with your children, how to strengthen the bond between spouses and how to create quality time for yourself.

The discussions were a wonderful way of creating an opportunity to explore the meaning of our lives within and beyond the workplace. By taking only lunch breaks, we neither cut down on work time nor family time but we enhanced both.

Awareness

You can start your own "bring your own *baon*" discussion in your office. This, in fact, is the simplest way to heighten the awareness for work-life balance among your co-employees and management. Start very simple so that you can sustain the effort.

- Identify two or three other people whom you think can help you organize the lunch-hour get-togethers. They could be your usual lunch mates.
- Identify a venue for your get-togethers. If your office has a pantry, you might want to reserve that for your get-together; you may choose a corner of your cafeteria (although that can get quite noisy) or you may reserve a conference room.
- Brainstorm on topics you would like to talk about over lunch. Most common topics are parenting, money issues, fashion trends, vacation options.
- Identify resource speakers within your group. You might not even have to go out of your office to find speakers; you can tap the different experiences of the people in your organization. For instance, somebody known to cook well can share about five recipes with you.
- If you decide to get speakers outside of your group, there are many organizations you can tap. For instance, if you want a discussion on how to handle emergencies, the Red Cross has volunteers who can come to speak to you. Some cosmetic companies offer free consultations for groups of over 20.
- You may also choose not to have a speaker but a group sharing. You could throw in a topic and each one can share and learn from each other's experiences. You just have to make sure that you have a good facilitator for this format who can direct the discussion, make sure only one person talks at a time and can synthesize points. This is a perfect format for discussions on how to plan family vacations, where to go shopping for essentials, how to earn extra money, etc.

Time discipline

Be sure to stick to the regular lunch hour. Start on time, finish on time. For your lunch groups to be sustainable, you must be able to manage time efficiently. If you extend the time, management will not be happy. You can get more tips on how to organize your "bring your own *baon*" discussions in the May issue of Metro Working Mom magazine with Jackie Lou Blanco on the cover.

You can also use your lunch breaks for quick field trips. Metro Working Mom and Rustan's Department Store, Makati is still offering pampering treats to mothers on Fridays and weekends. Just bring the coupons found inside the May issue of Metro Working Mom and you can exchange these for a free fashion consultation with the in-house fashion designers of Rustan's (every Friday), free foot spa at Essences (Fridays and weekends), free makeover from Christian Dior, and raffle prizes.

I would love to hear how your lunch sessions turn out. Please write to me at *workingmom@pinoycentral.com*.

(An Mercado-Alcantara is editor-in-chief of the magazine Metro Working Mom published monthly by ABS-CBN Publishing.)

BREAKFAST CHAT

How to get along with people at work

FINDING fulfillment and satisfaction in one's work does not begin and end with a job well done. For that to happen, one needs to have a good working relationship with one's co-workers.

Last Monday's People at Work segment on "Breakfast" aired on Studio 23 featured Kahlil Bagatsing, Business Development Officer of Channel Technologies. "Breakfast" host Bam Aquino and Inquirer's Corporate Relations Head Celine Madamba interviewed him on his insights on how people at work can relate with bosses, peers and subordinates. Below is the gist of the interview conducted both on and off the set.

Question: I understand that you have had extensive experience and training in exactly these kinds of situations. What would you say are the essentials of getting along with people at the workplace?

Kahlil: In everything we do, we deal with people and in order to succeed in life or in business, we have to know how to deal with people in the right way. There is rarely a job that isolates one from others. It's dealing with everyone else in the office that will help lead to success.

Question: Can you share with us something very specific? Like something you actually observed or had a chance to be involved in?

Kahlil: Well, I have been working in the family business as far back as I can remember. I love calling it a family business because I feel that everyone who works in the company is family. But then again, every family has its moments of being dysfunctional. That's just the way things are. We try to avoid such problems by keeping the communication lines open. Talk isn't always cheap.

Question: What if the other person does not want to cooperate?

Kahlil: At times, there are real difficult people to deal with but I believe that everyone has goodness or talent in them. It's just a matter of looking in the right places. We had numerous so-called "problem cases" in the office that eventually became gems. Sometimes all a person needs is a little faith and support. You'd be amazed at what they can do after.

Question: Suppose that you're the boss and one of your co-workers comes to you complaining about another person in the department, how would you handle it?

Kahlil: The first thing I would do is listen to both sides of the story. It's amazing how people can have totally different perspectives on the same situation. At times, just talking about it and putting things in perspective solves the problem. Chances are people just need to let out some steam. Should the situation gets worse, I always fall back on the Filipino management secret called "beer technology." That usually does the trick.

Question: And for the benefit of our junior employees out there, would you advise them to take the matter up with the supervisor?

Kahlil: Yes and no. It's really a case-to-case basis but my rule of thumb would be to try and settle the differences between the two parties first before bringing it up with the supervisor. For example, let's say that Celine didn't like the way I worked and told the boss about it. The boss then comes to me and brings up the problem while all the while, I thought that everything was okay between us. Instead of solving the problem, it actually made it worse.

BAM Aquino (left) and INQUIRER Corporate Relations head Celine Madamba (right) talk with Kahlil Bagatsing, Business Development head of Channel Technologies, in last Monday's Breakfast. Next Monday, May 20, the People at Work segment on Breakfast will discuss "Etiquette for Cell Phone Users." Breakfast airs Monday to Friday from 6:30 to 8 a.m. on Studio 23.

PHOTO BY RICKY GARCIA

Question: What are some of the most common issues or problems that occur in the workplace with regards to relating to your colleagues?

Kahlil: More often than not, simple misunderstandings can lead to the biggest problems. Someone says something, the other one hears something else. Next thing you know, World War III erupts. It's easier said than done but it's better to clarify things before letting it get out of hand. It does take humility but at the end of the day, making the effort will prove to be worth it.

Question: Can a company's culture affect the way people interact with one another?

Kahlil: I think that the company's culture plays an important role in the way people deal with each other. In our company, emphasize such values as teamwork. We help each other out by sharing our knowledge and other such things. By allowing for such an environment, productivity usually improves.

Question: What advise can you give in order for one to get along well at work?

Kahlil: The bottom line is you deal with people. People are different. They come from different backgrounds and see things differently. Always try to look at things from the other person's perspective and respect him or her as an individual. Getting along with people should become second nature after that.

Are you an abundant thinker?

RECIPES *for* LEARNING

Moje Ramos-Aquino

BY ALL accounts, life is becoming more fraught with scarcity and peril by the minute. Thus, many assume that life is all about surviving, coping and making it through the daily rigors.

In their thought-provoking book, "The Art of Possibility," authors Rosamund Stone Zander and Benjamin Zander write about our fatalistic outlook in life. One outlook, they say, is survival thinking which is the attitude that life is dangerous and that one must put one's energy into looking out for Number One. Another is scarcity thinking, which predicts that supplies—which appear fixed and limited—will eventually run out, an attitude as prevalent among the well heeled as among the down-at-heel. True scarcity, on the other hand, exist where resources are locally scarce and where people lack for their most fundamental needs while actual survival is experienced by people whose daily lives are in jeopardy such as those whose work entail physical risks.

Dangerous thinking

Survival and scarcity thinking are both dangerous ways of thinking. These are the attitudes that make one want and acquire for more no matter how much you already have, like a bottomless pit. These attitudes also prompt you to treat everybody else as competitors no matter how little they have.

The Zanders couple observe that when these attitudes prevail, as it is happening now, the frenzied accumulation of resources by some leave the others without enough, in a world that has the means to supply the basic needs of everyone. Thus, the rich becomes richer and the poor becomes poorer.

Along the freeway from Pretoria to Warmbaths to Pietersburg in South Africa, I observed that the land on both sides of the road have the same kind of fence. My friend Mulco Manyama said that it is because only one person owns the land. Imagine land far beyond what you can see stretched over a 210-kilometer diameter punctuated by squatters' colonies and townships (villages) for those who work for the owner of the land. And this pattern is repeated all around South Africa. And the Philippines.

These ways of thinking also result in the indiscriminate use of the earth's resources at the rate faster than the earth can regenerate and, therefore, leave the next generation with shrinking reserves, even nothing.

Measurements

Likewise, these give rise to our preoccupation with measurements. We like to measure everything. One acceptable adage in business is that what you cannot measure, you cannot manage. Our personal life and relationships are likewise measured in terms of gaining acceptance and threatened rejection, more and less, tall and short, etc.

Why do we think this way? Because this is how we have been thinking all our lives. We were born into a world of measurement, survival thinking and scarcity thinking. From time immemorial. There is a grave danger that we are, indeed, bequeathing the same fatalistic way of thinking to the generation next to us and even those far removed from us.

Possibilities

Now, let us explore another way of thinking and leading which the Zanders couple calls a universe of possibility. They write: "One that stretches beyond all worlds—infinite, generative, and abundant. Unimpeded on a daily basis by the concerns for survival, free from the generalized assumption of scarcity, a person stands in the great space of possibility in a posture of openness, with an unfettered imagination for what can be. In the realm of possibility, we gain our knowledge by invention.

"The action in a universe of possibility may be characterized as generative, or giving, in all senses of that word—producing new life, creating new ideas, consciously endowing with meaning, contributing, yielding to the power of contexts. The relationship between people and environments is highlighted, not the people and things themselves. Emotions that are often relegated to the special category of spirituality are abundant here: joy, grace, awe, wholeness, passion and compassion."

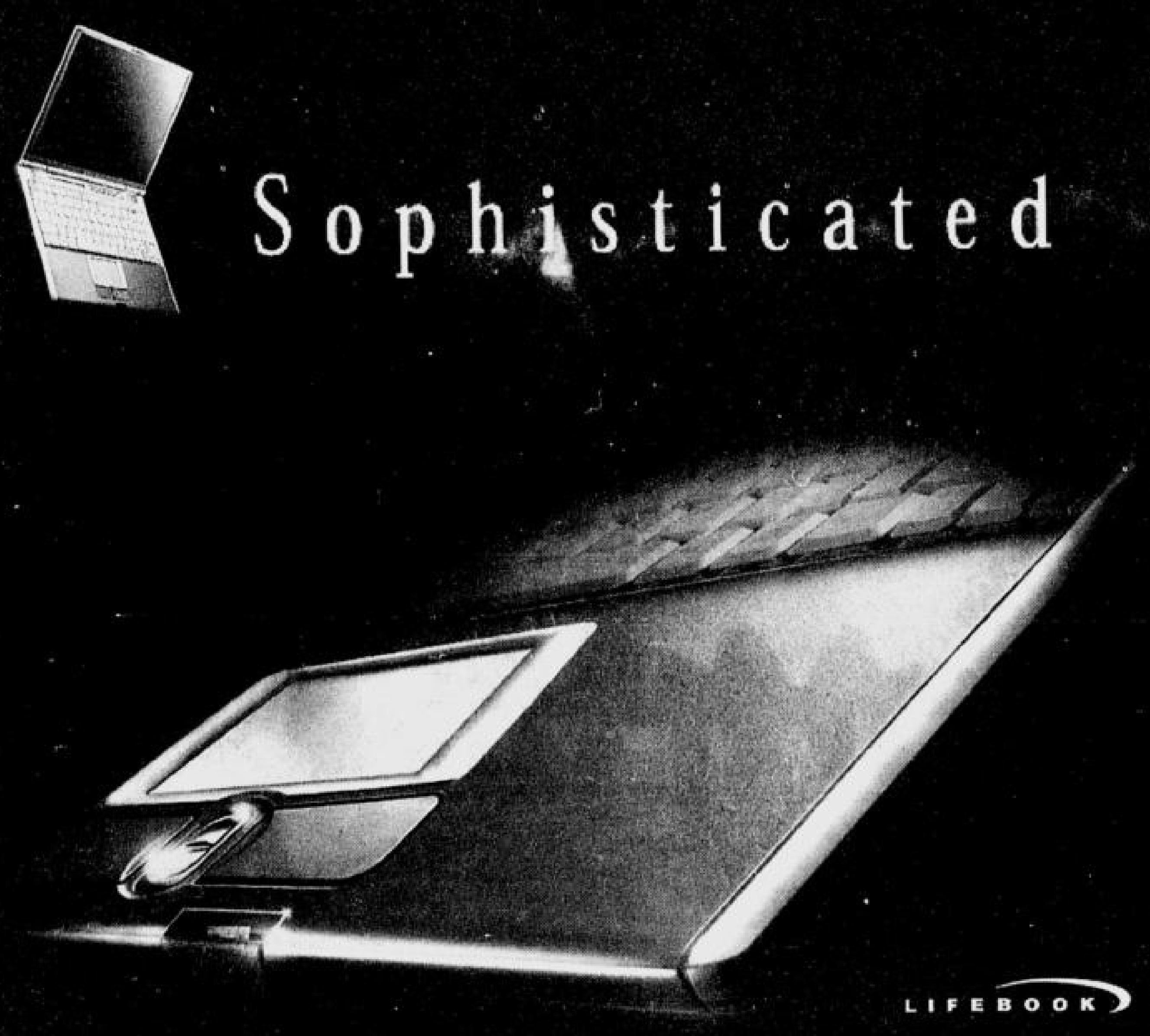
When we are oriented in abundance, there will always be new products, new customers and new ideas. Money and other resources are likely to come in greater abundance when one is generous and inclusive, and engage people in your passion for life. This means delayed gratification or giving away short-term gains to pursue a bigger dream.

In the measurement world, you set a goal and strive for it and thus be "successful." In the universe of possibility, you set the context and let life unfold, live a kind-hearted, feel-good life, and thus be "fulfilled."

(More on this next week.)

(Send feedback to Moje.Ramos@Aquino.ZZN.com*)*

THE POSSIBILITIES ARE INFINITE FUJITSU



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FORBESWOOD HEIGHTS

LUXURY GARDEN RESIDENCES

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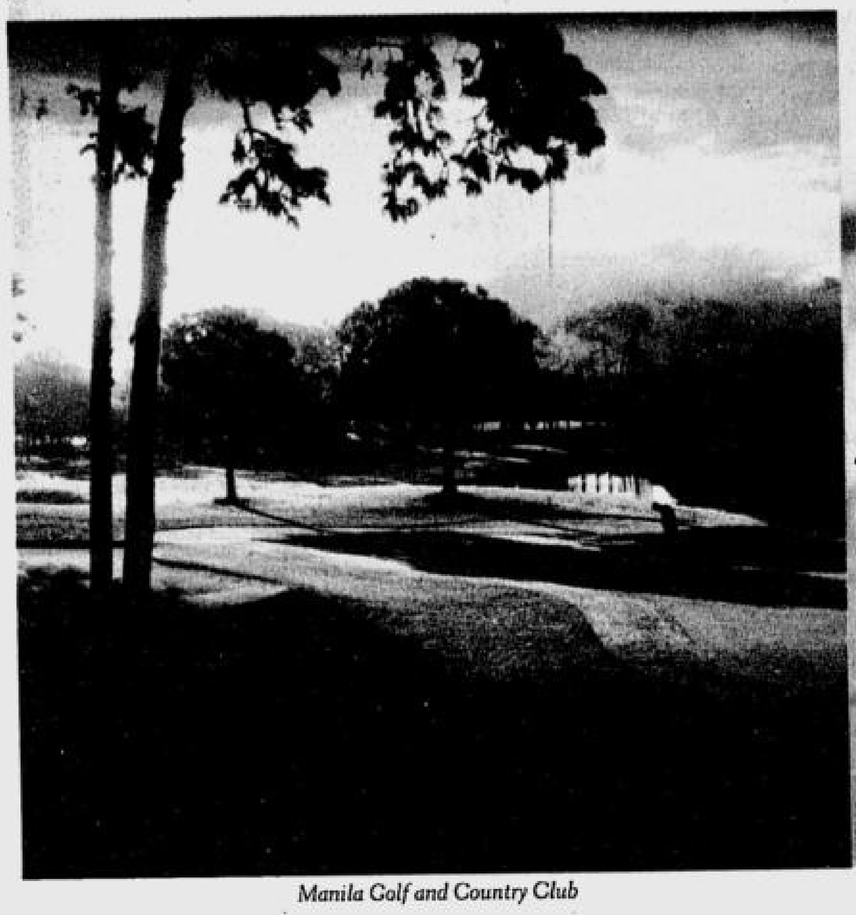
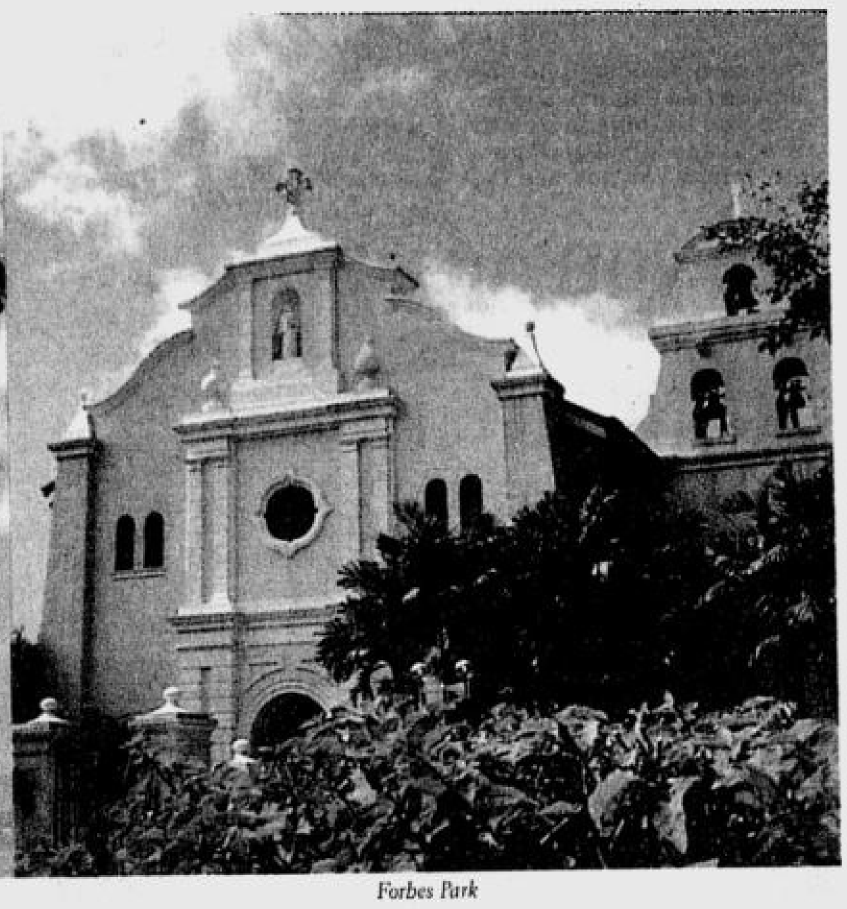


Manila Golf and Country Club

Manila Polo Club



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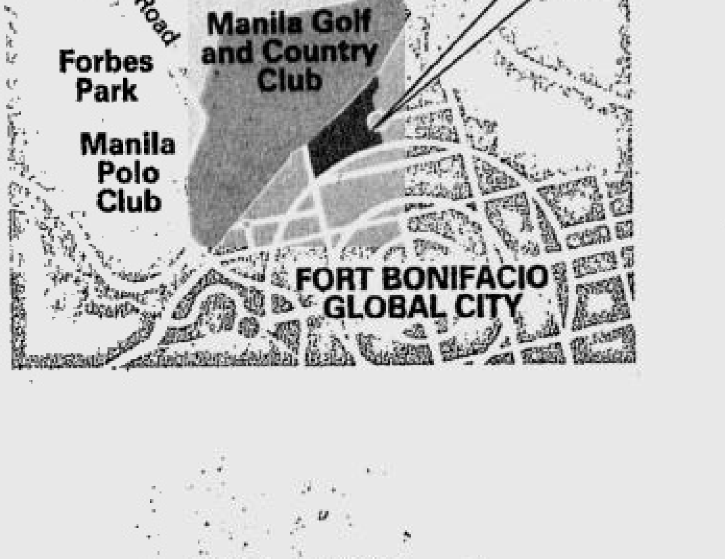
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BANKINGQuarterly

Editor **Raul O. Marcelo** ◆ *Assistant Editor* **Corrie S. Narisma**

Less uncertain, more promising prospects

By Clarissa S. Batino

LESS uncertain and more promising are the prospects of the banking sector in the coming quarter in anticipation of policies and legislation that will make profitability and sustainable growth more achievable.

While some banks will remain hobbled by problems about capital and loans gone sour, banking experts believe that more and more lenders will show better results by the end of the year.

Bangko Sentral Governor Rafael Buenaventura is more bullish now on the banking sector's recovery, citing a much-improved economic environment where the local currency is stable, the inflation rate still at modest levels, and interest rates at historic lows.

He vows to make it easier for banks to operate as the policy-making Monetary Board promises more incentives for mergers and acquisitions and less restrictive policies for the meantime.

"We want the banks to take off and we will do as much as we can for as long as they are reasonable to help the banks recover and regain their profitability," Buenaventura says.

Former central bank governor Jose Cuisia notes that recent economic improvements characterized by a growing gross domestic product and political stability will aid the gradual recovery of the banking sector.

"Rates have never been this low but loans have not picked up yet. The challenge is still to address the problematic loans," Cuisia points out.

The signing of the P25-billion rehabilitation package for the semi-government Philippine National Bank last May 3 is a positive sign well received not only by the banking sector but also by the business community.

Cuisia, however, continues to criticize the P25-billion "bailout" that the government provided PNB. "When they gave PNB the P25 billion, could the government not have gotten more," he asks.

Welcome move

Still, the consensus of banking experts is that the recovery of the country's sixth largest bank should bode well for its peers and competitors.

Tagged as too big to fail, the rehabilitation of PNB will take away a big part of a systematic risk in the banking sector, a risk that may have a domino effect on other

LESS/ C4

With key rates at new lows, banks become creative

By Elena R. Torrijos

NOW that interest rates are at historic lows, investors are looking for options that give higher returns. The INQUIRER asked three banks and a fund management group what they have to offer to these investors at this time.

Efren Salandanan
vice president for sales and service division
Security Bank Corp.

"Our recommendation really depends on the specific requirement of a client. Factors to be considered are the rates and flexibility or length of time that the client is willing to retain his funds in the bank. He may opt to prioritize rates over length of term or may choose a more flexible product that offers higher yields.

If a client wants flexibility with a high rate offer, we recommend the Build-up Savings Account (BSA). This product is a combined passbook and ATM account that earns a higher rate than that of a regular savings account at 4 percent. What's more, the account holder is also offered the convenience of doing banking transactions through Security Bank's other e-banking services like its phone banking facility (TeleBanker) and its mobile phone banking facility (MobileBanker). He can also link his regular savings account to the BSA through the "Maximizer", one of Security Bank's fund transfer services that automatically transfers excess funds from a regular savings account to the BSA.

If the client is willing to keep his funds on a longer period but wants to avail of higher interest rates, then other term deposits will apply. Security Bank can either offer its investment savings account or its trust product called "SB First" with a 30-day holding period or treasury bills and fixed treasury notes that offer various choices of tenors that will best suit clients' preference."

Rex Mendoza
president and chief executive
Philam Asset Management Inc.

"A lot of people will always look at a P100,000 base and automatically lock that up in a vehicle. That's not what we do. We sit down with people and say, 'What's the P100,000 for? What's your objective with that? Can you hold on to that in a three-year, four-year, five-year term?' What essentially happens is we break that P100,000 up. It will be good to put part of that in an equity portfolio because of the way the stock market is doing right now, but I'm not going to put that in a huge chunk of that, maybe 10, 20 percent in an equity portfolio that's actively managed. So we have that as well, the Strategic Growth Fund. Our Strategic Growth Fund is doing 12 percent year-to-date, and the balanced fund is doing 10. So it's still better than a bank rate, but that's the longer part of the P100,000. The liquidity base that he needs, however, should still be in a bank, maybe P10,000 or P5,000 in an ATM account. A little over that—P20,000—maybe in a bond fund, which nets him 9 percent. We also want to hedge part of that in a dollar fund, but because $2,000 is already P100,000, the thing to do is to hedge that in some way. We want him to realize that it has to be in a portfolio. But which part of that is really long term and guaranteed? None, so we offer him an insurance product."

Mervyn Encanto
executive vice president
Philippine National Bank

"We can offer a client with P100,000 to invest in any of the bank's deposit product with very competitive rates. These are:

- MNT Account. This account has a

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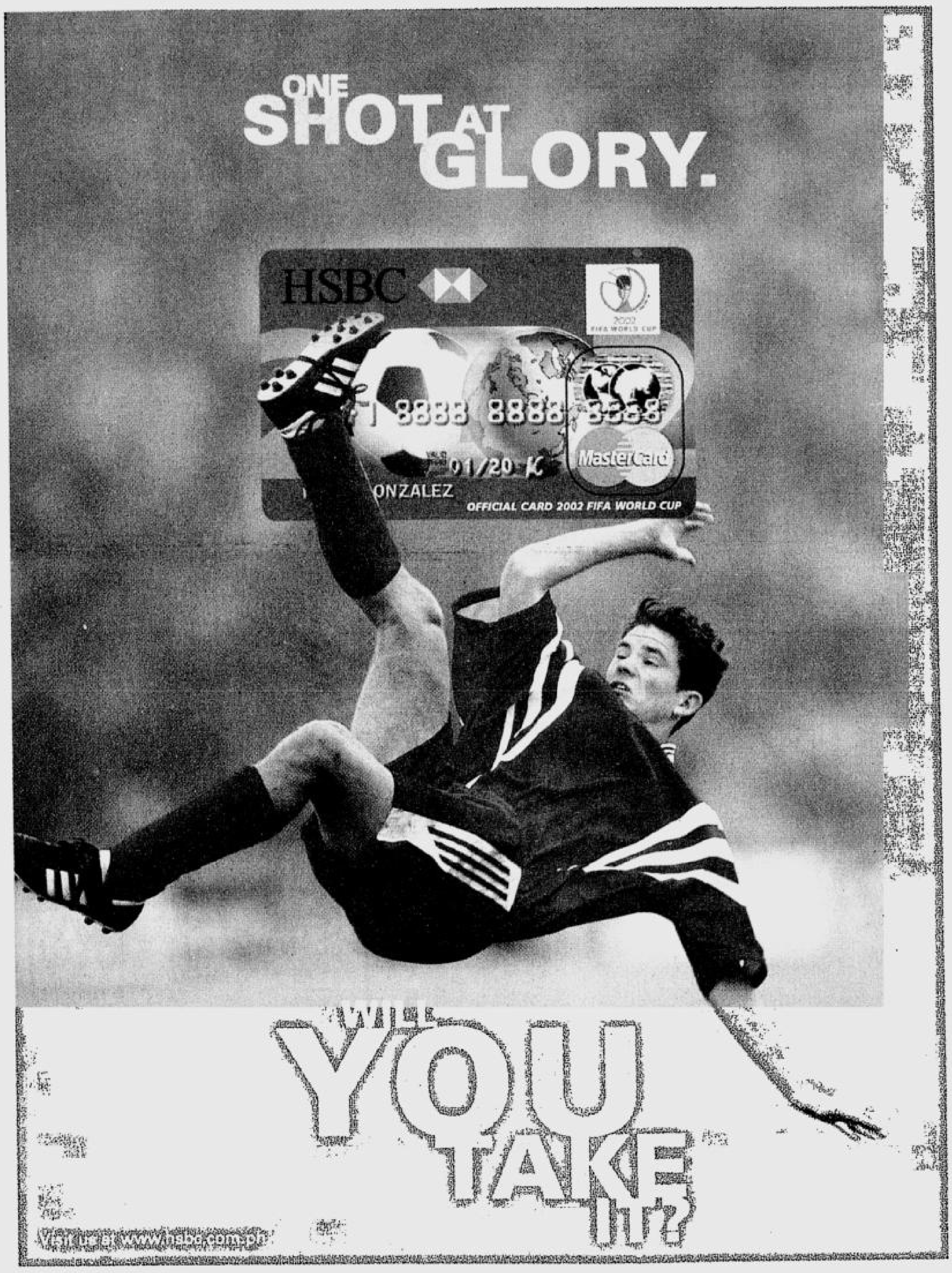

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How the banks fared

Total Deposit Accounts of Commercial Banks
(First Qtr. 2001 and 2002, and Fourth Qtr. 2001)

Ranking Q1	Q4	Commercial banks	Q1 '02	Q4 '01	% Change	Q1 '01	% Change
1	1	Metropolitan Bank & Trust Co.	299,741,125,921	297,235,716,291	0.8%	297,054,949,490	0.9%
2	2	Bank of the Philippine Islands	260,526,028,885	265,824,342,560	-2.0%	260,860,309,605	-0.1%
3	3	Land Bank of the Philippines	174,882,924,710	164,946,105,443	6.0%	152,056,011,710	15.0%
4	4	Equitable PCI Bank	154,748,773,504	139,172,114,638	11.2%	136,444,107,940	13.4%
5	5	Citibank	144,229,043,180	135,022,816,421	6.8%	130,709,095,691	10.3%
6	6	Philippine National Bank	129,587,266,806	124,827,191,401	3.8%	120,795,999,232	7.3%
7	7	Rizal Commercial Banking Corp.	103,148,061,214	102,024,795,397	1.1%	96,430,679,254	7.0%
8	8	United Coconut Planters Bank	80,594,452,142	91,176,542,394	-11.6%	89,359,331,560	-9.8%
9	9	Allied Banking Corporation	79,050,227,631	73,891,392,497	7.0%	73,416,301,943	7.7%
10	10	China Banking Corp.	63,816,941,970	59,881,958,230	6.6%	52,440,132,899	21.7%
11	11	Banco de Oro	59,816,553,218	54,746,394,945	9.3%	46,344,266,677	29.1%
12	12	HSBC	51,724,712,418	50,707,215,742	2.0%	43,810,211,099	18.1%
13	13	Security Bank Corp.	39,183,463,736	39,021,881,596	0.4%	43,769,692,454	-10.5%
14	14	Global Bank	36,578,298,777	44,761,593,860	-18.3%	41,810,859,514	-12.5%
15	15	Prudential Bank	35,813,430,815	35,233,822,899	1.6%	33,205,055,562	7.9%
16	16	Development Bank of the Philippines	33,098,550,703	31,256,880,853	5.9%	28,173,037,243	17.5%
17	17	Union Bank of the Philippines	32,185,243,038	27,867,344,060	15.5%	25,056,391,860	28.5%
18	18	Philippine Bank of Communications	30,817,212,312	28,310,203,472	8.9%	24,334,675,710	26.6%
19	19	International Exchange Bank	28,818,314,419	28,360,199,185	1.6%	27,102,085,968	6.3%
20	20	Philippine Trust Co.	27,068,483,389	27,024,546,777	0.2%	24,035,514,271	12.6%
21	21	Standard Chartered Bank	22,867,455,429	24,586,990,481	-7.0%	27,548,284,265	-17.0%
22	22	Bank of Commerce	16,233,936,887	14,423,883,592	12.5%	13,324,029,031	21.8%
23	23	Deutsche Bank AG	14,742,265,670	9,776,739,223	50.8%	10,439,480,572	41.2%
24	24	United Overseas Bank	12,760,101,151	12,484,699,287	2.2%	11,807,236,138	8.1%
25	25	Bank of Tokyo-Mitsubishi Ltd.	12,393,778,739	12,311,047,609	0.7%	10,391,856,710	19.3%
26	26	Chinatrust (Phils.) Comm'l Bank Corp.	10,827,744,217	10,447,802,343	3.6%	8,271,998,280	30.9%
27	27	East West Bank	9,669,971,002	8,402,645,909	15.1%	7,862,899,188	23.0%
28	28	Philippine Veterans Bank	8,392,796,010	8,786,987,987	-4.5%	9,700,423,830	-13.5%
29	29	ABN-AMRO Bank	6,693,384,463	6,921,028,508	-3.3%	6,593,435,172	1.5%
30	30	Asia United Bank	5,962,273,197	5,983,357,790	-0.4%	5,239,421,246	13.8%
31	31	Maybank Phils. Inc.	5,862,466,860	5,613,416,934	4.4%	4,785,300,273	22.5%
32	32	Export and Industry Bank	5,348,044,517	4,071,672,537	31.3%	2,132,384,941	150.8%
33	33	JP Morgan Chase Bank	5,311,806,009	4,772,073,586	11.3%	3,755,599,724	41.4%
34	34	Australia and New Zealand Banking Group	4,422,388,086	4,166,751,867	6.1%	3,617,293,367	22.3%
35	35	ING Barings	4,288,150,538	4,106,420,375	4.4%	3,355,523,807	27.8%
36	36	Bank of America	3,823,117,343	3,457,577,065	10.6%	9,804,909,195	-61.0%
37	37	Korea Exchange Bank	3,744,175,651	3,679,943,290	1.7%	1,912,193,761	95.8%
38	38	Banco Santander Phils., Inc.*	3,693,642,631	3,250,421,386	13.6%	4,470,309,132	-17.4%
39	39	Mizuho Corporate Bank*	3,462,242,205	3,408,433,730	1.6%	2,611,484,705	32.6%
40	40	International Commercial Bank of China	2,864,752,212	2,314,082,762	23.8%	2,506,180,062	14.3%
41	41	Bangkok Bank	487,534,354	414,233,985	17.7%	408,002,725	19.5%
42	42	Al-Amanah Islamic Bank	317,551,057	294,950,587	7.7%	275,166,901	15.4%
		Total Php	2,029,596,679,026	1,974,968,018,376	2.8%	1,897,822,122,707	6.9%

Investment in Bonds and Other Debt Instruments of Commercial Banks
(First Qtr. 2001 and 2002, and Fourth Qtr. 2001)

Ranking Q1	Q4	Commercial banks	Q1 '02	Q4 '01	% Change	Q1 '01	% Change
1	1	Bank of the Philippine Islands	86,321,760,650	90,543,710,405	-4.7%	89,510,010,939	-3.6%
2	2	Metropolitan Bank & Trust Co.	75,369,020,662	70,400,184,088	7.1%	78,065,232,785	-3.5%
3	3	Land Bank of the Philippines	62,057,055,743	68,328,116,663	-9.2%	55,815,555,240	11.2%
4	4	Citibank	36,648,202,850	38,271,380,667	-4.2%	32,550,433,489	12.6%
5	5	Philippine National Bank	34,680,644,097	28,678,418,715	21.0%	31,736,980,855	9.3%
6	6	China Banking Corp.	27,479,449,178	24,662,237,992	11.4%	14,385,753,735	91.0%
7	7	HSBC	21,471,237,453	23,063,755,709	-6.9%	24,015,307,447	-10.6%
8	9	Equitable PCI Bank	21,419,139,742	19,600,676,880	9.3%	23,490,519,052	-8.8%
9	8	Development Bank of the Philippines	19,925,594,662	20,207,498,877	-1.4%	20,104,027,944	-0.9%
10	10	Allied Banking Corporation	16,042,239,099	15,884,702,955	1.0%	22,084,869,510	-27.4%
11	11	Banco de Oro	14,932,305,468	14,391,858,867	3.8%	10,200,227,311	46.4%
12	13	Rizal Commercial Banking Corp.	14,357,183,383	13,764,475,676	4.3%	8,569,927,827	67.5%
13	15	Prudential Bank	11,554,642,443	11,261,847,477	2.6%	9,557,734,673	20.9%
14	12	Union Bank of the Philippines	9,514,498,890	14,097,066,545	-32.5%	13,939,154,788	-31.7%
15	17	Global Bank	8,509,702,348	9,710,736,188	-12.4%	8,892,911,197	-4.3%
16	20	Philippine Trust Co.	6,763,918,204	6,566,501,352	3.0%	4,989,496,105	35.6%
17	18	Standard Chartered Bank	6,510,667,798	8,213,166,273	-20.7%	6,206,685,923	4.9%
18	14	Security Bank Corp.	6,367,312,188	11,991,174,628	-46.9%	11,029,569,287	-42.3%
19	21	International Exchange Bank	6,187,141,492	6,535,267,823	-5.3%	5,947,872,134	4.0%
20	19	United Overseas Bank	6,171,849,800	6,597,871,877	-6.5%	6,355,211,035	-2.9%
21	22	Philippine Bank of Communications	5,296,136,827	4,479,732,178	18.2%	2,062,427,809	156.8%
22	16	United Coconut Planters Bank	4,981,019,241	10,077,209,250	-50.6%	12,582,386,504	-60.4%
23	23	Chinatrust (Phils.) Comm'l Bank Corp.	4,140,070,140	4,477,443,828	-7.5%	2,608,468,588	58.7%
24	25	Bank of Commerce	3,263,259,524	3,009,602,225	8.4%	2,122,134,251	53.8%
25	26	Export and Industry Bank	2,949,860,129	2,920,617,252	1.0%	1,439,835,275	104.9%
26	24	Philippine Veterans Bank	2,759,461,312	3,398,798,434	-18.8%	3,506,555,551	-21.3%
27	27	Bank of America	2,217,042,940	2,351,454,733	-5.7%	2,310,380,955	-4.0%
28	28	Mizuho Corporate Bank*	1,838,235,934	1,857,508,969	-1.0%	1,266,277,064	45.2%
29	33	JP Morgan Chase Bank	1,508,491,679	941,165,244	60.3%	2,484,532,921	-39.3%
30	29	Maybank Phils. Inc.	1,078,668,767	1,198,298,510	-10.0%	1,054,942,242	1.3%
31	36	ING Barings	936,985,109	603,533,353	55.2%	2,021,444,097	-53.6%
32	31	Australia and New Zealand Banking Group	935,963,681	1,000,004,375	-6.4%	902,116,111	3.8%
33	32	East West Bank	798,259,513	989,175,234	-19.3%	903,015,138	-11.6%
34	34	Korea Exchange Bank	724,913,984	743,553,984	-2.5%	804,730,602	-9.9%
35	38	Banco Santander Phils., Inc.*	705,614,923	544,708,221	29.5%	738,427,315	-4.4%
36	30	Asia United Bank	681,461,347	1,031,985,300	-34.0%	790,611,337	-13.8%
37	37	Bank of Tokyo-Mitsubishi Ltd.	510,337,767	558,473,786	-8.6%	500,338,561	2.0%
38	39	Bangkok Bank	284,827,694	291,173,219	-2.2%	279,328,809	2.0%
39	40	ABN-Amro Bank	233,262,336	95,320,338	144.7%	87,863,158	165.5%
40	41	Al-Amanah Islamic Bank	14,147,457	13,881,982	1.9%	22,503,183	-37.1%
41	35	International Commercial Bank of China	10,795,620	687,928,349	-98.4%	634,361,000	-98.3%
42	42	Deutsche Bank AG	-	-	-		
		Total Php	528,158,472,077	544,042,259,429	-2.9%	516,580,171,745	2.2%

Non-Performing Loans of Commercial Banks
(First Qtr. 2002 and Fourth Qtr. 2001)

Ranking Q1	Q4	Commercial Banks	Ratio to total loan portfolio Q1 '02	Q4 '01	Amount of NPL Q1 '02	Q4 '01	Total loan portfolio Q1 '02	Q4 '01
1	2	Al-Amanah Islamic Bank	80.00%	78.00%	7,506,289	7,352,367	9,382,861	9,426,112
2	3	United Overseas Bank	71.54%	69.72%	5,529,211,945	5,625,646,344	7,728,839,733	8,068,913,287
3	4	Philippine National Bank	49.00%	46.00%	47,332,000,000	45,568,000,000	96,595,918,367	99,104,347,826
4	5	United Coconut Planters Bank	31.87%	32.25%	20,734,540,145	20,877,080,855	65,059,743,180	64,735,072,419
5	6	Bank of Commerce	30.67%	31.72%	3,671,745,826	3,517,161,768	11,970,221,771	11,088,851,024
6	7	Philippine Bank of Communications	27.87%	29.58%	6,549,113,170	6,707,101,040	23,498,791,425	22,674,445,708
7	8	Global Bank	26.05%	24.21%	8,968,960,794	9,007,824,643	34,429,791,916	37,454,872,544
8	9	Export and Industry Bank	25.78%	23.18%	1,094,690,383	981,372,378	4,246,277,669	4,233,703,097
9	10	Prudential Bank	22.79%	25.97%	4,510,475,477	5,246,980,490	19,791,407,648	20,204,006,508
10	11	Equitable PCI Bank	22.05%	22.88%	29,522,433,017	28,479,750,334	133,888,585,111	124,474,433,278
11	12	Allied Bank	21.54%	20.57%	9,479,367,000	9,556,097,000	44,008,203,343	46,456,475,450
12	13	Philippine Veterans Bank	21.29%	16.86%	1,521,008,597	1,145,675,375	7,144,239,535	6,795,227,610
13	14	Land Bank of the Philippines	20.96%	25.14%	28,654,834,610	31,029,007,915	136,711,997,185	123,424,852,486
14	15	Rizal Commercial Banking Corp.	19.30%	16.72%	16,196,477,000	14,163,605,000	83,919,569,948	84,830,173,445
15	16	JP Morgan Chase Bank	18.45%	0.00%	196,931,221	-	1,067,377,892	1,246,000,000
16	17	Bangkok Bank	15.98%	15.81%	364,026,732	381,359,012	2,278,014,591	2,412,137,965
17	18	Philippine Trust Co.	15.75%	14.82%	2,707,746,255	2,432,795,397	17,192,039,716	16,415,623,462
18	19	Maybank Phils. Inc.	15.51%	13.06%	1,098,434,251	854,909,292	7,082,103,491	6,546,012,955
19	20	International Exchange Bank	15.42%	13.83%	3,113,873,108	3,068,116,323	20,193,729,624	22,184,499,805
20	21	Bank of the Philippine Islands	14.90%	13.41%	22,245,000,000	21,480,000,000	149,295,302,013	160,178,970,917
21	22	HSBC	14.46%	18.26%	3,834,237,000	4,758,368,454	26,516,161,826	26,059,082,442
22	23	China Banking Corp.	14.31%	13.74%	5,869,842,085	6,021,664,680	41,019,162,020	43,825,798,253
23	24	Development Bank of the Philippines	13.68%	11.64%	11,368,659,721	9,456,763,405	83,104,237,727	81,243,671,864
24	25	East West Bank	12.42%	12.13%	1,080,302,884	1,004,167,191	8,698,090,853	8,278,377,502
25	26	Banco de Oro	11.71%	11.23%	5,672,093,683	5,122,454,416	48,438,033,160	45,614,019,733
26	27	International Commercial Bank of China	11.65%	12.30%	1,187,114,743	1,276,570,027	10,189,826,120	10,378,618,106
27	28	Metropolitan Bank and Trust Co.	10.83%	18.10%	18,060,847,538	33,065,767,969	166,766,828,606	182,683,800,934
28	29	Union Bank of the Philippines	10.55%	10.93%	3,217,996,944	2,910,430,431	30,502,340,701	26,627,908,792
29	30	Security Bank	10.52%	11.71%	4,108,461,837	3,982,503,331	39,053,819,743	34,009,422,126
30	31	Chinatrust (Phils.) Comm'l Bank Corp.	8.02%	8.94%	743,571,940	794,794,272	9,271,470,578	8,890,316,241
31	32	Standard Chartered Bank	7.44%	8.87%	1,810,040,026	1,792,996,632	24,328,494,973	20,214,167,215
32	33	Deutsche Bank AG	7.07%	12.19%	768,300,251	768,300,251	10,867,047,394	6,302,709,194
33	34	Asia United Bank	5.83%	3.00%	471,072,484	253,533,179	8,080,145,517	8,451,105,967
34	35	Mizuho Corporate Bank (Fuji Bank Ltd)	5.47%	5.50%	497,105,536	499,593,145	9,087,852,578	9,083,511,727
35		ABN-Amro Bank	4.58%	3.85%	446,858,956	373,931,912	9,756,745,764	9,712,517,195
36	37	Korea Exchange Bank	4.28%	8.28%	78,821,724	149,725,730	1,841,629,064	1,808,281,767
37	38	Australia & New Zealand Banking Group	3.50%	4.31%	149,123,391	173,161,020	4,260,668,029	4,017,657,085
38	39	ING Barings	2.52%	3.34%	376,677,183	278,677,542	14,947,507,273	8,340,644,970
39	40	Bank of Tokyo-Mitsubishi Ltd.	1.90%	1.69%	219,504,103	225,639,026	11,552,847,526	13,351,421,657
40	41	Citibank	1.26%	1.60%	1,785,255,114	2,132,938,311	141,686,913,825	133,252,394,423
41	42	Bank of America	0.07%	0.07%	1,737,418	1,728,475	2,482,025,714	2,469,250,000
42	43	Banco Santander Phils. Inc.	0.00%	0.00%	-	-	3,011,290,132	2,792,183,929
		Total Php			276,246,000,372	286,272,544,933	1,571,574,736,121	1,549,944,907,020

Total Capital Accounts of Commercial Banks
(First Qtr. 2001 and 2002, and Fourth Qtr. 2001)

Ranking Q1	Q4	Commercial banks	Q1 '02	Q4 '01	% Change	Q1 '01	% Change
1	2	Bank of the Philippine Islands	49,490,115,493	47,790,103,955	3.6%	49,088,875,108	0.8%
2	1	Metropolitan Bank & Trust Co.	49,163,235,211	48,392,895,673	1.6%	47,438,659,760	3.6%
3	3	Equitable PCI Bank	42,081,496,925	44,109,163,592	-4.6%	44,845,054,112	-6.2%
4	4	Land Bank of the Philippines	19,894,722,026	18,317,851,695	8.6%	19,493,593,651	2.1%
5	5	Development Bank of the Philippines	18,781,356,502	17,633,309,505	6.5%	16,237,236,895	15.7%
6	6	Rizal Commercial Banking Corp.	15,275,555,198	13,338,912,593	14.5%	14,021,076,637	8.9%
7	7	Philippine National Bank	13,987,898,950	12,869,412,423	8.7%	21,526,538,488	-35.0%
8	9	China Banking Corp.	13,363,708,602	12,716,974,989	5.1%	12,091,265,938	10.5%
9	8	Union Bank of the Philippines	13,157,404,364	12,806,238,514	2.7%	13,014,734,680	1.1%
10	10	Allied Banking Corporation	12,461,937,383	11,807,809,066	5.5%	12,909,165,443	-3.5%
11	11	Banco de Oro	11,348,736,229	11,078,083,191	2.4%	8,265,892,674	37.3%
12	12	Security Bank Corp.	9,229,070,502	9,021,345,385	2.3%	8,610,163,999	7.2%
13	13	Prudential Bank	8,061,857,599	8,131,730,861	-0.9%	7,827,504,276	3.0%
14	14	Global Bank	7,553,736,269	7,475,729,232	1.0%	7,381,993,272	2.3%
15	15	Philippine Bank of Communications	6,387,243,100	6,110,568,560	4.5%	6,126,702,446	4.3%
16	16	United Coconut Planters Bank	5,234,692,290	5,780,532,137	-9.4%	10,228,777,163	-48.8%
17	17	Citibank	4,658,034,937	4,656,700,899	0.0%	4,652,848,949	0.1%
18	24	Export and Industry Bank	4,000,674,096	2,747,727,382	45.6%	2,810,084,633	42.4%
19	19	Philippine Trust Co.	3,764,119,892	3,668,949,510	2.6%	3,490,972,917	7.8%
20	18	Philippine Veterans Bank	3,721,727,492	3,736,025,803	-0.4%	3,831,700,179	-2.9%
21	20	International Exchange Bank	3,653,837,830	3,621,011,686	0.9%	3,406,628,533	7.3%
22	21	Bank of Commerce	3,378,587,521	3,353,107,259	0.8%	3,475,853,591	-2.8%
23	22	Chinatrust (Phils.) Comm'l Bank Corp.	3,141,917,149	2,919,581,453	7.6%	2,784,735,252	12.8%
24	23	Asia United Bank	2,876,120,880	2,853,299,701	0.8%	2,705,775,700	6.3%
25	25	East West Bank	2,709,667,870	2,683,914,240	1.0%	2,691,168,110	0.7%
26	27	Banco Santander Phils., Inc.*	2,612,940,856	2,559,160,995	2.1%	2,513,805,144	3.0%
27	26	Maybank Phils. Inc.	2,544,772,832	2,566,719,457	-0.9%	1,839,246,346	38.4%
28	30	ABN-AMRO Bank	2,453,052,001	1,349,106,138	81.8%	2,048,152,729	19.8%
29	28	United Overseas Bank	1,621,927,942	1,877,302,335	-13.6%	1,603,113,864	1.2%
30	29	HSBC	1,350,000,000	1,350,000,000	0.0%	1,350,000,000	0.0%
31	31	Standard Chartered Bank	1,240,000,000	1,240,000,000	0.0%	900,000,000	37.8%
32	32	ING Barings	1,238,084,497	1,237,500,000	0.0%	1,237,500,000	0.0%
33	33	Bank of Tokyo-Mitsubishi Ltd.	720,433,671	720,433,671	0.0%	720,433,671	0.0%
34	34	Deutsche Bank AG	625,000,000	625,000,000	0.0%	1,110,487,235	-43.7%
35	35	Mizuho Corporate Bank*	601,912,599	601,912,599	0.0%	601,912,599	0.0%
36	36	Australia and New Zealand Banking Group	501,484,255	478,394,303	4.8%	331,331,315	51.4%
37	37	Bank of America	422,500,000	422,500,000	0.0%	422,500,000	0.0%
38	41	International Commercial Bank of China	405,434,000	199,026,345	103.7%	438,157,374	-7.5%
39	38	Bangkok Bank	265,831,677	265,831,677	0.0%	265,831,677	0.0%
40	39	Korea Exchange Bank	257,000,000	257,000,000	0.0%	257,000,000	0.0%
41	40	JP Morgan Chase Bank	234,020,431	236,635,321	-1.1%	284,079,928	-17.6%
42	42	Al-Amanah Islamic Bank	(242,364,094)	(229,102,789)	-5.8%	(191,669,141)	-26.4%
		Total Php	344,229,492,978	333,378,390,355	-3.3%	344,687,785,128	0.1%

Real and Other Properties Owned or Acquired
(First Qtr. 2001 and 2002, and Fourth Qtr. 2001)

Ranking Q1	Q4	Commercial banks	Q1 '02	Q4 '01	% Change	Q1 '01	%Change
1	2	Philippine National Bank	25,109,032,388	22,895,836,910	9.7%	24,445,712,230	2.7%
2	1	Metropolitan Bank & Trust Co.	24,555,365,131	23,403,607,074	4.9%	23,415,480,079	4.9%
3	3	United Coconut Planters Bank	20,557,195,041	20,188,909,141	1.8%	18,265,695,417	12.5%
4	4	Land Bank of the Philippines	11,404,833,413	10,885,777,491	4.8%	10,146,193,429	12.4%
5	5	Equitable PCI Bank	9,868,351,276	9,166,061,530	7.7%	8,902,360,261	10.9%
6	6	Bank of the Philippine Islands	9,062,365,764	7,707,567,867	17.6%	6,874,102,538	31.8%
7	7	Rizal Commercial Banking Corp.	6,798,502,178	6,638,759,603	2.4%	4,856,427,247	40.0%
8	8	Union Bank of the Philippines	5,514,791,486	5,149,402,596	7.1%	4,489,979,243	22.8%
9	9	Allied Bank	5,165,233,201	4,948,602,470	4.4%	4,136,771,270	24.9%
10	10	Philippine Bank of Communications	5,001,724,436	4,777,198,094	4.7%	2,684,762,962	86.3%
11	11	Banco de Oro	4,431,417,626	4,241,348,425	4.5%	4,276,351,086	3.6%
12	12	China Banking Corp.	4,312,522,864	3,492,317,798	23.5%	2,926,249,914	47.4%
13	14	Prudential Bank	3,565,187,288	3,327,100,312	7.2%	2,698,771,122	32.1%
14	13	Security Bank	3,505,611,139	3,439,033,612	1.9%	2,772,294,358	26.5%
15	15	Global Bank	3,258,829,573	3,325,767,680	-2.0%	2,252,713,404	44.7%
16	16	Development Bank of the Philippines	3,017,109,397	2,873,313,885	5.0%	2,551,059,437	18.3%
17	17	International Exchange Bank	2,099,587,437	1,786,373,229	17.5%	1,743,453,598	20.4%
18	18	Bank of Commerce	1,518,595,788	1,521,985,762	-0.2%	1,105,015,162	37.4%
19	19	Philippine Veterans Bank	1,362,416,978	1,514,215,606	-10.0%	1,494,031,027	-8.8%
20	24	Export and Industry Bank	923,827,804	259,505,635	256.0%	220,501,774	319.0%
21	21	East West Bank	554,974,248	564,685,331	-1.7%	492,451,314	12.7%
22	22	Philippine Trust Co.	411,902,791	411,042,051	0.2%	399,341,268	3.1%
23	23	Citibank	382,914,651	387,901,558	-1.3%	709,125	53898.2%
24	25	Maybank Phils. Inc.	282,444,899	248,792,546	13.5%	217,821,126	29.7%
25	26	Standard Chartered Bank	125,938,458	87,616,527	43.7%	69,901,660	80.2%
26	27	JP Morgan Chase Bank	85,000,000	85,000,000	0.0%	-	
27	28	HSBC	77,507,727	77,630,357	-0.2%	20,316,822	281.5%
28	29	Banco Santander*	66,742,000	66,742,000	0.0%	-	
29	30	United Overseas Bank	63,065,990	62,838,580	0.4%	67,388,537	-6.4%
30	31	International Commercial Bank of China	55,928,933	57,096,395	-2.0%	64,909,995	-13.8%
31	32	Al-Amanah Islamic Bank	40,188,313	40,536,404	-0.9%	41,314,041	-2.7%
32	20	ABN-Amro Bank	35,952,274	669,566,187	-94.6%	544,874,892	-93.4%
33	33	ING Barings	1,590,844	1,590,844	0.0%	-	
34	34	Asia United Bank	907,219	907,219	0.0%	-	
35	35	Bangkok Bank	35,877	35,877	0.0%	34,686	3.4%
		TOTAL Php	153,217,695,332	144,304,668,694	6.2%	132,176,909,002	15.9%

Loans, Discounts and Advances of Commercial Banks
(First Qtr. 2001 and 2002, and Fourth Qtr 2001)

Ranking Q1	Q4	Commercial Banks	Q1 '02	Q4 '01	% Change	Q1 '01	% Change
1	1	Metropolitan Bank & Trust Co.	151,055,591,843	173,064,419,582	-12.7%	170,937,873,205	-11.6%
2	2	Bank of the Philippine Islands	131,382,669,322	139,354,114,862	-5.7%	144,041,430,444	-8.8%
3	4	Land Bank of the Philippines	108,286,310,056	97,472,621,437	11.1%	95,420,407,662	13.5%
4	3	Equitable PCI Bank	102,487,268,883	100,374,823,630	2.1%	98,388,344,202	4.2%
5	5	Philippine National Bank	73,411,520,183	75,630,416,597	-2.9%	80,332,575,058	-8.6%
6	7	Citibank	72,777,103,496	71,743,732,352	1.4%	73,881,102,087	-1.5%
7	6	Development Bank of the Philippines	71,009,240,165	72,737,265,018	-2.4%	76,521,581,485	-7.2%
8	8	Rizal Commercial Banking Corp.	63,844,609,887	69,423,678,311	-8.0%	68,464,497,908	-6.7%
9	9	United Coconut Planters Bank	51,678,906,458	51,846,836,821	-0.3%	55,031,239,553	-6.1%
10	10	Banco de Oro	36,521,788,657	38,677,077,739	-5.6%	34,448,722,792	6.0%
11	11	China Banking Corp.	35,603,477,965	37,272,493,065	-4.5%	35,816,025,880	-0.6%
12	12	Allied Banking Corp.	34,603,325,623	36,238,372,614	-4.5%	39,341,138,429	-12.0%
13	13	Global Bank	31,183,065,649	33,717,090,067	-7.5%	31,194,678,339	0.0%
14	14	Security Bank Corp.	30,808,443,293	31,466,479,793	-2.1%	30,213,429,270	2.0%
15	15	HSBC	20,657,458,540	22,599,049,522	-8.6%	21,522,606,605	-4.0%
16	27	Standard Chartered Bank	20,220,811,845	16,333,658,737	23.8%	15,420,616,643	31.1%
17	17	Prudential Bank	18,475,905,245	19,082,423,297	-3.2%	18,967,328,672	-2.6%
18	16	International Exchange Bank	18,101,739,634	19,871,854,313	-8.9%	19,525,471,098	-7.3%
19	18	Philippine Bank of Communications	17,355,687,431	16,659,636,940	4.2%	19,199,080,109	-9.6%
20	19	Philippine Trust Co.	15,943,995,540	15,007,760,959	6.2%	14,080,865,736	13.2%
21	35	Export and Industry Bank	13,458,881,597	3,615,576,224	272.2%	3,469,825,085	287.9%
22	20	Union Bank of the Philippines	12,989,787,482	14,249,277,335	-8.8%	14,853,640,950	-12.5%
23	21	Bank of Tokyo-Mitsubishi Ltd.	11,030,368,771	12,576,782,125	-12.3%	10,878,340,434	1.4%
24	22	Bank of Commerce	10,638,010,546	9,859,258,962	7.9%	10,933,277,932	-2.7%
25	24	ABN-AMRO Bank	9,161,069,599	9,414,068,332	-2.7%	11,471,769,661	-20.1%
26	23	International Commercial Bank of China	9,077,561,935	9,719,033,720	-6.6%	9,502,906,905	-4.5%
27	31	ING Barings	8,930,285,333	6,971,340,026	28.2%	8,858,989,044	0.9%
28	25	Mizuho Corporate Bank*	8,431,171,121	8,935,970,711	-5.6%	6,845,959,937	23.2%
29	28	East West Bank	8,326,003,561	7,864,634,978	5.9%	6,423,551,146	29.6%
30	26	Chinatrust (Phils.) Comm'l Bank Corp.	8,314,059,279	8,580,269,661	-3.1%	8,028,168,000	3.6%
31	29	Asia United Bank	7,539,372,094	7,818,946,917	-3.6%	6,527,906,499	15.5%
32	30	United Overseas Bank	6,967,386,772	7,168,005,604	-2.8%	6,584,072,165	5.8%
33	32	Deutsche Bank AG	5,565,505,341	5,397,581,829	3.1%	4,581,175,659	21.5%
34	33	Maybank Phils. Inc.	5,164,787,572	4,792,691,895	7.8%	3,901,178,878	32.4%
35	34	Australia and New Zealand Banking Group	4,125,297,015	3,863,764,908	6.8%	3,538,918,617	16.6%
36	36	Philippine Veterans Bank	3,768,289,825	3,281,239,855	14.8%	3,754,169,015	0.4%
37	37	Bank of America	2,383,295,548	2,551,459,759	-6.6%	3,920,164,345	-39.2%
38	38	Banco Santander Phils., Inc.*	1,900,599,879	2,264,126,988	-16.1%	2,312,963,288	-17.8%
39	39	Korea Exchange Bank	1,871,287,681	1,726,939,534	8.4%	1,779,011,563	5.2%
40	40	Bangkok Bank	1,457,884,381	1,714,926,434	-15.0%	1,126,166,858	29.5%
41	41	JP Morgan Chase Bank	587,745,056	689,166,757	-14.7%	1,012,083,251	-41.9%
42	42	Al-Amanah Islamic Bank	3,864,996	3,909,469	-1.1%	18,827,688	-79.5%
		TOTAL Php	1,247,110,565,299	1,271,632,777,679	-1.9%	1,273,060,102,769	-2.0%

Total Assets of Commercial Banks
(First Qtr. 2001 and 2002, and Fourth Qtr. 2001)

Ranking Q1	Q4	Commercial Banks	Q1 '02	Q4 '01.	% Change	Q1 '01	% Change
1	1	Metropolitan Bank & Trust Co.	380,024,700,378	386,645,897,300	-1.7%	373,087,518,646	1.9%
2	2	Bank of the Philippine Islands	327,894,644,882	334,138,384,780	-1.9%	348,600,105,904	-5.9%
3	3	Citibank	276,633,986,154	257,314,386,556	7.5%	231,623,857,498	19.4%
4	4	Equitable PCI Bank	244,890,161,776	234,093,422,361	4.6%	247,585,705,454	-1.1%
5	5	Land Bank of the Philippines	235,233,559,226	227,188,519,318	3.5%	207,713,907,896	13.2%
6	6	Philippine National Bank	184,697,780,792	186,468,692,813	-0.9%	188,289,109,200	-1.9%
7	7	Development Bank of the Philippines	148,370,063,682	143,778,778,423	3.2%	169,509,124,792	-12.5%
8	8	Rizal Commercial Banking Corp.	147,471,023,379	139,917,137,644	5.4%	127,578,619,200	15.6%
9	9	United Coconut Planters Bank	100,303,828,831	108,341,102,149	-7.4%	111,050,638,805	-9.7%
10	10	Allied Banking Corp.	95,462,291,019	94,166,774,514	1.4%	90,632,500,533	5.3%
11	11	China Banking Corp.	85,184,383,484	81,716,704,660	4.2%	72,772,951,654	17.1%
12	13	Banco de Oro	80,246,777,343	75,565,816,406	6.2%	62,727,839,977	27.9%
13	12	HSBC	76,081,164,920	76,079,271,720	0.0%	63,838,104,297	19.2%
14	14	Security Bank Corp.	62,577,402,154	65,205,703,448	-4.1%	63,892,651,909	-2.1%
15	15	Global Bank	54,973,685,904	59,611,626,860	-7.8%	55,172,501,386	-0.4%
16	16	Union Bank of the Philippines	53,850,785,532	54,298,230,120	-0.8%	49,859,377,299	8.0%
17	17	Prudential Bank	45,866,313,558	46,165,480,661	-0.6%	51,137,129,960	-10.3%
18	18	Philippine Bank of Communications	40,934,595,959	39,317,058,738	4.1%	39,174,474,974	4.5%
19	19	Standard Chartered Bank	38,791,826,434	37,385,784,604	3.8%	36,933,629,287	5.0%
20	20	International Exchange Bank	35,268,234,746	35,923,629,677	-1.8%	33,905,287,342	4.0%
21	21	Philippine Trust Co.	31,754,861,396	31,335,492,905	1.3%	28,298,614,542	12.2%
22	37	Export and Industry Bank	26,874,721,202	9,065,415,160	196.5%	7,376,673,425	264.3%
23	22	Bank of Tokyo-Mitsubishi Ltd.	22,220,107,187	22,930,149,225	-3.1%	21,439,432,119	3.6%
24	23	Bank of Commerce	21,349,728,703	20,997,532,778	1.7%	18,953,243,473	12.6%
25	26	Deutsche Bank AG	20,935,500,036	15,809,140,249	32.4%	17,015,493,499	23.0%
26	24	International Commercial Bank of China	20,044,806,947	17,927,131,301	11.8%	15,543,757,255	29.0%
27	25	United Overseas Bank	15,726,219,199	16,391,882,300	-4.1%	16,160,511,170	-2.7%
28	27	Chinatrust (Phils.) Comm'l Bank Corp.	15,534,644,942	15,505,087,252	0.2%	12,618,818,882	23.1%
29	34	ING Barings	15,491,743,418	11,683,506,953	32.6%	17,016,810,653	-9.0%
30	31	East West Bank	13,540,702,840	13,020,505,687	4.0%	11,155,642,950	21.4%
31	30	Philippine Veterans Bank	13,389,324,044	14,351,813,417	-6.7%	14,523,576,414	-7.8%
32	28	Mizuho Corporate Bank*	12,854,891,313	14,916,387,301	-13.8%	14,096,056,408	-8.8%
33	32	ABN-Amro Bank	12,312,891,437	11,952,050,234	3.0%	14,008,173,750	-12.1%
34	33	Asia United Bank	12,053,528,180	11,705,859,157	3.0%	9,765,407,207	23.4%
35	35	Australia and New Zealand Banking Group	10,615,109,653	10,633,464,351	-0.2%	13,702,792,200	-22.5%
36	39	JP Morgan Chase Bankb	10,369,641,693	7,685,552,166	34.9%	9,061,941,974	14.4%
37	36	Maybank Phils Inc.	10,242,756,717	9,819,186,980	4.3%	8,363,686,016	22.5%
38	38	Bank of America	8,276,894,459	8,808,968,887	-6.0%	15,084,899,672	-45.1%
39	40	Banco Santander Phils. Inc.*	6,783,763,228	6,814,282,383	-0.4%	7,511,279,416	-9.7%
40	41	Korea Exchange Bank	6,113,392,250	6,118,979,616	-0.1%	4,574,348,556	33.6%
41	42	Bangkok Bank	3,718,691,620	4,074,211,049	-8.7%	3,941,606,184	-5.7%
42	43	Al-Amanah Islamic Bank	101,260,383	97,653,201	3.7%	10,480,108	-8.4%
		TOTAL Php	3,025,062,211,097	2,965,026,675,219	2.0%	2,905,410,690,985	4.1%

- First Qtr. 2002 figure=merged ABN-Amro and TA Bank
- Sum of ABN-Amro and TA Bank figures before merger, except NPL and ROE ratios=ABN Amro only
  - **ABN Amro**, Q4 '01: Assets=10.6B; Bonds=93M; Capital=779M; Deposits=6.6B; Loans=9.2B; Ropoa=23M; NPL ratio=3.85%; NPL amount=374M; ROE=4.44%
  - **TA Bank**, Q4 '01: Assets=1.4B; Bonds=2M; Capital=570M; Deposits=285M; Loans=250M; Ropoa=647M, NPL ratio=95%, NPL amount=440M; ROE=-55.23%
  - **ABN Amro**, Q1 '01: Assets=12.1B; Bonds=88M; Capital=776M; Deposits=6.3B; Loans=10.5B; Ropoa=25M; NPL ratio=6.58%; NPL amount=310M, ROE=5.86%
  - **TA Bank**, Q1 '01: Assets=1.9B; Bonds=__; Capital=1.3B; Deposits=263M; Loans=982M; Ropoa=519M; NPL ratio=28.25%; NPL amount=0.3M; ROE=__
- Merged Banco de Oro & Dao Heng Bank
- Sum of Banco de Oro and Dao Heng Bank figures before merger
  - **Banco de Oro**: Assets=58.2B; Bonds=9.9B; Capital=5.8B; Deposits= 44.6B; Loans=31.3B; Ropoa=4.2B; NPL ratio=7.81%; NPL amount=2.8B; ROE=8.28%

Sources: Published statements of condition, BSP

Return on Equity
(First Qtr. 2001 and 2002, and Fourth Qtr. 2001)

Ranking Q1	Q4	Commercial Banks	Q1 '02	Q4 '01	Q1 '01
1	1	HSBC	32.63%	22.62%	47.08%
2	5	JP Morgan Chase Bank	30.97%	14.72%	6.79%
3	10	Chinatrust (Phils.) Comm'l Bank Corp.	26.23%	8.75%	9.56%
4	6	Deutsche Bank AG	25.28%	14.06%	-
5	2	Citibank	17.41%	22.23%	23.60%
6	3	Australia and New Zealand Banking Group	15.86%	21.93%	26.55%
7	12	ING Barings	12.99%	7.99%	8.72%
8	8	Asia United Bank	12.16%	10.33%	10.54%
9	9	Development Bank of the Philippines	10.96%	9.95%	9.78%
10	7	Bank of the Philippine Islands	10.76%	12.51%	6.21%
11	4	International Exchange Bank	8.74%	15.94%	6.43%
12	13	Union Bank of the Philippines	8.50%	7.45%	7.07%
13	11	Land Bank of the Philippines	8.32%	8.47%	3.19%
14	14	China Banking Corp.	8.30%	7.29%	5.71%
15	24	Allied Banking Corp.	7.00%	3.03%	5.57%
16	22	Bank of Tokyo-Mitsubishi Ltd.	5.87%	3.80%	12.98%
17	18	Security Bank Corp	5.81%	4.84%	5.77%
18	16	Banco de Oro	5.55%	5.89%	8.28%
19	28	Philippine Bank of Communications	5.08%	1.54%	5.46%
20	20	Metropolitan Bank & Trust Co.	4.93%	4.39%	3.52%
21	17	Philippine Veterans Bank	4.35%	5.46%	5.35%
22	25	Banco Santander Phils., Inc.*	3.05%	2.57%	1.87%
23	31	Mizuho Corporate Bank*	3.00%	1.00%	6.00%
24	21	Rizal Commercial Banking Corp.	2.82%	4.06%	2.59%
25	26	East West Bank	2.32%	2.46%	0.43%
26	29	Standard Chartered Bank	1.21%	1.54%	-6.15%
27	33	Prudential Bank	1.16%	0.63%	3.43%
28	15	Philippine Trust Co.	1.07%	6.51%	1.84%
29	32	Export and Industry Bank	1.05%	0.85%	1.87%
30	27	Bangkok Bank	0.65%	1.75%	-1.18%
31	30	Korea Exchange Bank	0.29%	1.49%	1.04%
32	34	Equitable PCI Bank	0.27%	0.33%	2.22%
33	23	Global Bank	0.07%	3.35%	0.81%
34	35	Bank of Commerce	0.00%	0.00%	0.47%
35	19	ABN-Amro Bank	-0.86%	4.40%	5.86%
36	36	International Commercial Bank of China	-10.23%	-8.55%	-5.10%
37		Maybank Phils. Inc.	-10.42%	-	-
38	38	Al-Amanah Islamic Bank	-24.79%	-26.31%	-30.00%
39	40	Philippine National Bank	-27.00%	-48.00%	-46.00%
40	37	Bank of America	-29.11%	-26.21%	82.87%
41	39	United Coconut Planters Bank	-46.42%	-41.59%	-2.48%
42	41	United Overseas Bank	-49.59%	-48.98%	-39.87%

Dao Heng Bank: Assets=4.5B; Bonds=264M; Capital=2.4B; Deposits=1.8B; Loans=3.1B; Ropoa=91M; NPL ratio=19.66%; NPL amount=677M; ROE=-2.77%

- **Banco Santander** total loan portfolio amount derived from its reported Dosri amount & Dosri ratio
- Merged with **Traders Royal Bank** but First Qtr. 2002 and Fourth Qtr. 2001statements do not reflect figures of merged entity
- Formerly **Chase Manhattan Bank**; Total loan portfolio for Fourth Qtr. 2001 given by JP Morgan
- Formerly **Fuji Bank Ltd.**
- **Maybank**=no ROE reported for Q1 and Q4 2001; **Deutche Bank**=no ROE reported for Q1 2001
- Merged Export & Industry Bank & Urban Bank
- Export & Industry Bank figures only

Compiled by Maricar D. Tolosa, PDI Research

Special purpose asset vehicles not a cure-all

By Clarissa S. Batino

MANY feel that a proposed law providing incentives to entice banks to form special purpose asset vehicles may fall short of expectations; worse, there are those who believe that it will not serve its purpose at all.

This skepticism is casting a tall shadow over a banking industry that is already reeling from P440 billion in bad loans and assets, but it is something that requires immediate answers.

Finding a solution to this problem is an accepted condition before banks can again lend aggressively.

US investment firm Salomon Smith Barney estimates that the local banking sector's non-performing assets—a combination of soured and restructured loans, as well as acquired and foreclosed assets—will account for about a third of its total loan portfolio by year's end.

SPAV

A special purpose asset vehicle—also known as an "asset management company"—acquires a bank's bad assets and loans at huge discounts and normally has the expertise in turning around and selling these at a better price or collecting loans at higher rates.

Lawmakers are currently working on a bill that gives banks two years to sell their bad loans and assets to special purpose asset vehicles, which will, in turn, have five years to find a buyer or collect on the loans.

The bill's main incentive exempts special purpose asset vehicles from documentary stamp and capital gains taxes that are being applied every time an asset is sold.

Other perks in the pipeline involve a longer net operating loss carryover and allowing banks to carry over huge losses in succeeding years for tax deduction purposes. Lawmakers, however, seem willing to grant a net operating loss carryover of only seven years.

Banks are also pushing for a provision that will allow them to own at least 30 percent of a special purpose asset vehicle so they will have a share of the earnings from the disposal of their bad assets and collection of soured loans.

Skeptics

As the proposed law takes shape, however, more and more people are becoming less and less convinced that it will cure problems currently plaguing the banking sector, especially with the supposed efforts of some lawmakers to water it down to protect their interests.

Union Bank of the Philippines president Victor Valdepeñas said the bill pending in Congress would not be enough to bridge the pricing gap between banks and special purpose asset vehicles.

Banks naturally want to sell foreclosed assets at the best price or close to prevailing market rates, he said. On the other hand, he noted, asset management firms are seeking to buy these at floor prices, preferably at a discount of 70 to 80 percent. This means a bank holding a piece of foreclosed property worth P1 million may only sell it at P200,000.

Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas Deputy Governor Alberto Reyes said the pricing would eventually improve, but he could not say by how much.

A person familiar with the matter revealed that the incentives provided for in the special purpose asset vehicle bill would improve on the current offer by only 10 percentage points, if not lower, which meant banks could, at most, expect 30 to 40 percent of the market value of the assets they would dispose off.

Land Bank of the Philippines executive vice president Alfonso Cruz believes allowing banks to partially own special purpose asset vehicles will let them sell their bad assets at a substantial discount and, at the same time, take a share at the earnings of these special purpose asset vehicles.

"If we have a share of the upside, it will be more attractive to banks even if we sell to the special purpose asset vehicle initially at a discount," Cruz said.

Pricing gap

Valdepeñas, an economist, is not convinced that special purpose asset vehicles will rationalize the pricing gap.

"I don't think the special purpose asset vehicle will help influence the pricing because the cost of the incentives will be very little in relation to the big divide," he said.

He said provisions that banks had put up for loan losses would not be enough to plug losses that selling at an 80-percent discount would cause.

Banks would have to charge the difference to its capital, he said. "The offer price of the special purpose asset vehicles would wipe out the provisions and the capital. It would be very difficult at a time when the banking system is already under-reserved."

Still, Valdepeñas agreed with regulators that having a law that would help provide an enabling environment to solve problematic accounts was better than nothing.

Bangko Sentral Governor Rafael Buenaventura said despite growing concerns that the merits of the proposed law were being eroded by some provisions, he remained confident it would help solve the banking sector's problems once enacted.

Buenaventura is hoping that the special purpose asset vehicle law will be passed within the year if not before the Congress breaks for a recess in June.

Insertion

A banking source said a provision deftly inserted in Congress would allow debtors themselves to reacquire their own mortgaged assets at steep discounts.

Section 13 of bill pending before the House of Representatives allows the "original borrower or owner of the NPA (non-performing asset)" to "participate in (an) auction, with all the incentives as provided, notwithstanding the fact that said borrower may not be a special purpose asset vehicle."

The Department of Finance said this provision would discourage special purpose asset vehicles from aggressively operating, saying other provisions of the proposed law already gave borrowers enough opportunity to buy the assets back.

The bill, for instance, provides a longer reckoning period for a loan to be declared non-performing.

From the 90-day period set by the central bank, the law will recognize a loan to be non-performing 180 days after neither the principal nor the interest has been unpaid.

The pending bill also gives a borrower another 90 days to restructure and renegotiate the loan before the assets will be foreclosed. This will be on top of the one-year redemption period provided by the General Banking Act of 2000.

The finance department found it odd that a defaulting borrower would be rewarded by being allowed to participate in the process and giving him all of the incentives at the same time.

With key rates at new lows . . .

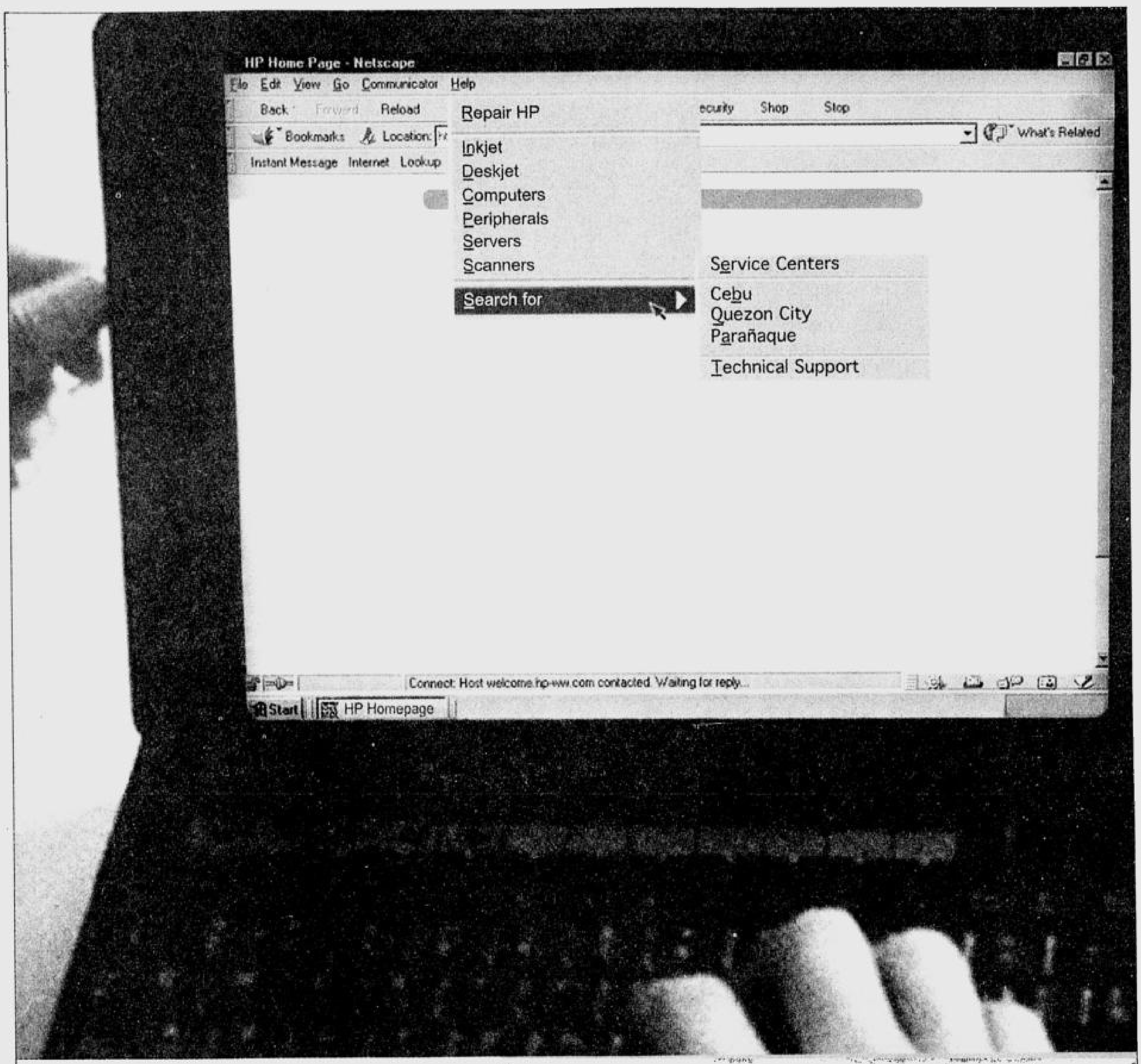
From page C1

holding period of 180 days with an interest rate of 5 percent per annum. Interest shall be paid after every 30 days from the date the account was opened.

- PNBig Savings Account. A high-yielding savings account with one of the highest rates in the market depending on the term of the placement.
- Prime Savings Account. Another high-yielding savings account for P50,000 and over wherein the client can withdraw twice a month without charges
- Regular Savings Account. The most convenient savings account wherein the client can deposit and withdraw in any PNB branch nationwide

Alberto Reyno
senior vice president
Development Bank
of the Philippines

"It depends on his need for funds because if he can lock it in for three to four years, meaning he does not need the entire amount for the period, I would suggest that he invests the amount in T-bills, particularly the retail treasury bonds which are very safe. It is guaranteed by the government with a fairly good yield compared to the prevailing rates. Furthermore, the interest is paid every quarter. This is a very secured investment option."



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Less uncertain, more promising prospects

From page C1

3rd Quarter
BANKS

lenders.

PNB's biggest problems are its huge non-performing loans, a concern shared by more than half of the commercial banking sector. As of the end of March, the NPL ratio of the big banks combined stood at 17.51 percent of total loans.

The soured loans amounted to P275.24 billion as of the first quarter, down from P285.27 billion in the fourth quarter of 2001. Total loans also grew to P1.572 trillion as of end-March from P1.55 trillion.

The drop in total NPLs is largely accounted for by the decision of the country's largest, the Metrobank group, to take out P15 billion worth of soured credit from its loan portfolio.

This led to a drop in its NPL to P18.06 billion from P33.065 billion in end-2001 or a ratio of 10.83 percent of total loans.

Metrobank, whose assets stood lower at P380 billion in the first quarter from P387 billion last year, sold P15 billion worth of its NPLs to US firm Lehman Brothers last December.

But the central bank is not sure whether the bank is already allowed to reflect the agreement in its books.

Buenaventura says Metrobank can already take the bad loans out but BSP Deputy Governor Alberto Reyes claims the lender still has to get Monetary Board approval for the move.

The bad loans ratio of PNB went up again to 49 percent or P47.332 billion from P45.588 billion or 46 percent in end-2001.

Fourth largest Land Bank of the Philippines was able to reduce its bad loans to P28.65 billion from P31 billion or a ratio of 20.96 percent from 25.14 percent of total loans.

Landbank's loan portfolio also rose by P13 billion or 10.8 percent to P136.71 billion in the first quarter.

Of the 15 banks whose bad loans ratio were higher than the industry average, American lender JP Morgan Chase Bank (formerly Chase Manhattan Bank) posted an NPL ratio of 18.45 percent or P196.93 million, the first time it booked soured credits in its modest loan portfolio of P1.06 billion.

Metrobank's lead

The central bank likes other lenders to follow the lead of Metrobank, especially once the law providing incentives to special purpose asset vehicles or SPAVs is approved within the year.

Alfonso Cruz, executive vice president of Landbank, says the multilateral groups like the World Bank and the Asian Development Bank must be encouraged to form their asset management companies.

Cruz says the multilateral groups can provide a better pricing for the soured assets of banks.

Some INQUIRER sources claim that the emerging version of the SPAV bill in both houses of Congress is being watered down to benefit some legislators with vested interests.

Concerns are being raised by the banking sector that even without the selfish interests of some groups, the SPAV may not be as useful to their cause as what the government is touting it to be.

Buenaventura says the law shall provide an enabling environment for banks to wipe out the bad loans from their books so they can lend again. He points out that nobody can force the banks to dispose their bad loans and assets to the SPAVs if the lenders do not want to.

"Banks are hesitant to lend because of the bad loans they are carrying. We hope that if we provide the environment for them to take these NPLs out, they will again extend credit more aggressively. But we can't force them to do anything they don't want to do," says the central bank chief.

And the BSP appears to be willing to go the extra mile to help banks recover.

During the start of the second quarter, the central bank says it will come up with new policies that can help the lenders cope with their sluggish appetite for credit and weak finances.

The central bank is including foreclosed assets in computing loans-to-deposit ratio so that the banks that have not been lending can still meet the 75-percent minimum ratio.

Also, the BSP may allow banks to charge current provisions to previous earnings, a practice that is not allowed by auditors and being opposed by conservative bankers like Victor Valdepeñas, president of Union Bank of the Philippines.

Valdepeñas says that allowing banks to charge the current loan provision to retained earnings will destroy a fundamental relationship between income and capital.

Counter-productive

"This move can be counter-productive. If you say income is going up but capital is going down, you make a fundamental relationship meaningless. And this is not acceptable specially for listed banks," explains the Union Bank president.

As of end-March, Union Bank is the 16th largest with assets of P53.85 billion and a manageable NPL ratio at 10.55 percent or P3.2 billion of total loans worth P30.5 billion.

Also being prepared by the BSP for implementation starting the third quarter is an enhanced package of incentives for mergers and acquisitions.

BSP's Reyes, however, acknowledges that banks must first address their problematic loans before they can focus on rebuilding their strength and entertaining merger plans.

"The banking sector is still plagued with high NPLs and until this is resolved, banks will continue to stay cautious, Cuisia adds.

Valdepeñas agrees that many lenders will continue to worry about problems rather than focus on opportunities. "It is going to be a checkered year with some banks showing a stronger performance and others remaining in a deep bind," he predicts.

Cuisia says he believes the performance of Bank of the Philippine Islands will be a leading indicator to most lenders. BPI, the second largest with assets of P327.9 billion, is projecting a 5- to 10-percent growth in loans this year.

The Ayala-owned bank also says it has started to write off loans that it identified as "impossible to collect." Last year, BPI says it wrote off P1.8 billion worth of problematic accounts and may take out another P2 billion this year to keep its NPL ratio at a modest 12 percent.

At the end of the first quarter, however, the bad loans of BPI stood at 14.9 percent or P22.2 billion of total loans from a ratio of 13.41 percent as of end-2001.

Analysts say the strategy of BPI may set a trend in the industry although a declining level of capital as a consequence of increasing provisions for loan losses is also a concern.

People, Events & Products

More conveniences for Cebu Pacific passengers

FOR THE CONVENIENCE of its summer passengers, Cebu Pacific has added yet another great value offering as it ties up with Park 'n Fly.

Ongoing until June 18, all CEB customers are entitled to a special 20-percent discount on parking rates at Park n' Fly, a multi-level, fully secured parking facility where they could leave their vehicles for the entire duration of their trip. CEB passengers only have to present their flown ticket or boarding pass when they collect their vehicles to avail of the discounted parking rate, which is given on a one-time basis only per flown ticket.

Complimentary air-conditioned shuttle buses are available to comfortably transport passengers to and from both the domestic and international airports and back.

Park n' Fly, located at the corner of MIA and Domestic Roads, also features such amenities as state-of-the-art car repair and maintenance services, a 24-hour convenience store, banking facilities, barber shop, coffee shop, courier service and travel agency.

Flag carrier Cebu Pacific began flying international with the startup of its twice-daily Hong Kong services in November 2001 and thrice-weekly Seoul operations this March. It recently expanded its domestic services as it opened flights between Manila and Butuan City last March 22.

For inquiries, call the CEB corporate headquarters at 637-9168 or Park n' Fly at 854-9302 to 04.

DOT VOLUNTEER BRINGS IN 71 TOURISTS

Shown are some of the 71 visitors from Detroit, Chicago who arrived in Manila for a three-day religious conference recently. Their trip was arranged by US-based Filipino Ariel Sison, a tourism volunteer of the Department of Tourism under its V-12 Program, which aims to boost tourist arrivals through the help of the 7.38 million Filipinos abroad. The program calls on every overseas Filipino to bring in at least one tourist a month, or 12 tourists in a year.

MasterCard awards P1.5M in prizes

MASTERCARD International recently concluded its highly successful MasterCard's Priceless Pleasures Promotion, where almost P3 million in cash and other prizes were awarded to 104 lucky MasterCard cardholders in the Philippines.

Topping the list of prizes were the first and second Grand Draw prizes of P1 million and P500,000 in cash. The prizes were awarded to Citibank MasterCard cardholder Jenny Hao and Standard Chartered-Sun Life MasterCard cardholder Lilia Galvante.

Three third Grand Draw prizes of trip packages to Bangkok, Thailand were awarded to Bankard MasterCard cardholder Roberto Go, HSBC MasterCard cardholder Josette Marcilla, and BPI MasterCard cardholder Elizabeth Mago.

Conducted from December 2001 to March 2002, MasterCard's Priceless Pleasures Promotion attracted over 75,000 entries from MasterCard cardholders all over the Philippines. Almost P1 million worth of cash credits and gift certificates for shopping and dining were given away in the three monthly draws preceding the grand draw.

MasterCard's promotion followed two other highly successful usage promotions in the Philippines. All three promotions were leveraged on the award-winning global Priceless advertising campaign. The Priceless usage promotions gave MasterCard cardholders in the Philippines great opportunities to experience their own priceless moments through various prizes that ranged from cash and trips to gadgets and gift certificates.

"We are thrilled by the huge success of the series of Priceless usage promotions. These helped increase MasterCard's profile in the local market and continued to reinforce the image of MasterCard as a dynamic, vibrant, and creative brand," said Jose Rene Villa-Real, vice president and country manager, Philippines, MasterCard International.

MasterCard
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P 1,000,000.00

Shown is P1-million grand prize winner Jenny Hao (third from left) with, from left Gert Batocabe, MasterCard member relations representative, Liel Gonzales, Citibank AVP-marketing, Judith Dayrit, MasterCard director for marketing and member relations, Beah Teh-Tan, Citibank VP-cards category, and Anton Corro, MasterCard technology and operations manager.

Tagaytay weekend treat

THE DEVELOPMENT Academy of the Philippines Hotel is offering a special treat for everyone wishing to spend a relaxing weekend in cool and breezy Tagaytay City.

The DAP is extending a Special Weekend Treat Promo discount of as much as 30 to 50 percent for an overnight stay inclusive of a Filipino breakfast. Recreational facilities such as billiard tables, darts, table tennis courts, basketball courts, and tennis courts are available to guests free of charge.

All guestrooms are provided with amenities including linen, toiletries, private toilet and bath and walk-in closet. Aside from these, suite rooms and cottages are provided with a cable TV and a refrigerator.

Other services offered are Business Center Services such as computer, copying, and Internet services while pasalubong and souvenir items are readily available at the DAP Shoppe.

DAP is just across the Picnic Grove, the newly opened Nature's Park, and the Mama Mary Shrine. DAP may be reached using the Cavite Coastal Road or the Superhighway Carmona and Sta. Rosa exits.

PIA SIGNS UP WITH MANELS

Manels Leathergoods Corp., known for its matching shoes and bags and the leader in corporate giveaways manufacturing, recently signed up with Pia Guanio, a television and radio personality. Guanio is the image model of the Manels shoes and bags. Manels stores are found in leading shopping malls of the metropolis and key provincial cities.

FIXED-INCOME EXCHANGE

Robust debt market to help economy move forward

FOR the past three years, Vicente Castillo has been chair of the Bankers Association of the Philippines' powerful open market committee. BAP members once again elected him for another term last March.

Castillo is also president of Banco Santander Philippines Inc., a unit of one of Europe's largest banks, Banco Santander of Spain. Prior to his current post, he served as head of the treasury department of Bank of the Philippine Islands where he also held the distinction of being one of the youngest vice presidents, if not the youngest, in the bank in his time.

Castillo has been very active in working out efforts to address many of the banking industry's woes, especially in the investment banking sector, which, in the past few years has been under severe stress that eventually resulted in the collapse or near collapse of several investment banks and investment houses. Such problems eroded public confidence in the money market, and to woo back investors' confidence in the industry, various programs have been and are being set in place.

In a recent interview with The INQUIRER*'s Elena R. Torrijos, Castillo talked about the reforms his committee was undertaking and how these would impact on the ordinary Filipino.*

Foremost of these is the planned P500-million fixed-income exchange that also involves the insurance industry and the investment houses association.

Q&A

Question : What reforms is the BAP, particularly your committee, pushing for right now?

Answer: We are in the final stage of implementing the plan to create a trading and settlement platform with self-regulating capability for the secondary trading of fixed-income securities which will be called the fixed-income exchange. This is a major endeavor that started with reforms in risk identification and risk valuation. These reforms are geared toward creating a risk-based capital system that is in line with central bank circulars on local banks graduating to Bank of International Settlement (BIS) standards.

There are also reforms in public disclosure and transparency policies as well as in the terms of distribution trading which will lead to the development of the debt capital market. In effect, the fixed-income exchange is the culmination of these measures.

Q: What will the fixed-income exchange do for the public?

A: Its primary purpose is to put together the proper price discovery. This means the public will be able to see anytime the price of the commodity that it is holding—initially government securities but will eventually include bank issues, corporate issues and even fixed-income fund issues.

Secondly, it will put in place the proper convention for disclosure and transparency of both the dealers-brokers and the issuers participating in that market.

And third, it means the creation of the proper conventions for settlement and clearing so that from price discovery to disclosure and transparency to the eventual clearing and settlement of your transactions are out into place.

Q: Will the settlement and clearing be done t + 0 or same day? Will it be delivery-versus-payment (certificates are paid upon delivery)?

A: I think to achieve a t + 0 is difficult. We probably should be looking initially at t + 2 (settlement and clearing on second day after the order) and eventually all the risks will be covered since transactions at the exchange will be made on a payment-versus-payment or delivery-versus-payment basis. So, t + 0 is probably ideal but I think very few markets have actually achieved it. I am looking at t + 1 or t + 2.

Q: You are also looking at reforms in the trust fund business? What kind of reforms are these?

A: That is another project. We have already put together conventions on underwriting, conventions on distribution, and conventions on settlement and clearing. The last part to complete the scenario is the creation of the conventions for unit funds, particularly funds that are going to be concentrated on fixed-income assets.

There will be reforms on valuations and disclosure. Valuation is likewise in progress at this point. Hopefully, we will be successful in negotiating with the central bank for a no-reserve-requirement policy on these unit funds. We hope these unit funds will not be subjected to the single borrower's limit and that the banks will really be facing a well-defined expertise-risk, rather than capital-at-risk, based on their professional capacity.

Q: How will these reforms affect investors in common trust funds?

A: First of all, as an individual and not as a professional fund manager, it is better to buy a common trust unit that has the diversity of a fixed-income exposure rather than buy just one issue. It gives you diversity.

Second, it provides you professional advice because qualified professionals will manage these funds. And third, it will become more efficient because access to the market will be through the fund rather than you as an individual trying to buy into all these small issues. It (third effect) creates diversity and efficiency.

These reforms give you the true value of these assets. These reforms should allow you to get more knowledge on the function of the fund, the commitments and limitations of the funds. You can choose the fund that fits your risk aversion. Also, we hope we can get unit funds listed on the exchange. As of today, your fund is supported, liquidity-wise, only by the bank that issued it or the bank that is managing it. When it is listed, more dealers can book liquidity into the fund. That should widen the alternatives open to the public outside of the price discovery and settlement. It allows wider market reach for you to exercise the liquidity feature of your assets.

Q: Will it be expensive for me to trade fixed-income securities in the exchange?

A: Well, definitely, trading at the exchange will probably cost you the same amount that you are spending right now except that the price of the asset and your access to the market will be disclosed. Therefore, you can choose the dealer that will give you the best deal and the investment that will give you the best price and risk reward returns. There will be an unbundling of the prices from the public's perspective because there will be a convention wherein the price to access the market is totally differentiated from the yield or price of the asset you want to acquire in the market.

Q: Some investment houses and investment banks failed because of the so-called buy-back arrangements. How prevalent is this in the industry and what is being done about it?

A: Among the major things that transpired in the last two years was the implementation of mark-to-market procedures, conventions on distribution and the conventions for reflecting one's position in his balance sheet. Also, reporting to the regulatory agencies was strictly enforced.

I think this practice (buy-back arrangement) can be avoided as these conventions for accounting and disclosure standards are implemented.

The exchange, as a self-regulating body, can assist concerned regulatory agencies in terms of enforcing the disclosure policy on financial institutions.

Honestly, I really think that practice is on the way out. It is a practice that has been proven time and again to be dangerous.

Q: Currently, most of those covered by buy-back arrangements are government securities, and there is at present a huge amount of outstanding government securities. How much would you say is being distributed through buy-back arrangements?

A: These repurchase agreements have developed because of two things: the mode of sourcing your inventory and the very expensive nature of the transaction, particularly the costs arising from the documentary stamp tax and reserve requirement. So what the market should negotiate first is the elimination of the documentary stamp tax, then have the repurchase agreement transactions reflected in the books. Second is to have a more realistic reserve requirement.

CASTILLO: The BAP is working on several reforms to develop the capital markets.

The transfer of the security under a repurchase agreement to a third party custodian, for instance, should not be covered by the same reserve requirement as that on a regular deposit. This is because the obligation on a borrowing that is secured by securities, particularly government securities, is entirely different from the obligation on a deposit.

Q: Will a change in the reserve requirement require legislation?

A: No. It is entirely up to the Monetary Board and we are presently negotiating with it on the matter. There is already a circular issued in 1974 requiring a third party custodian. Except that having a third party custodian with the same reserve requirement will just add cost to the equation. If the reserve requirement will be taken out, you will be able to allow a custodian to engage in the business of borrowing and lending securities through the cash securities swap transaction. If the market fully develops, there is the possibility that the custody cost can be eliminated because the income arising from the borrowing and lending securities will be higher.

Q: How big is the reserve requirement for repurchase agreements now?

A: If I issue a deposit certificate, I set aside 16 percent and if I issue a repurchase agreement that is covered by securities, I also have to set aside 16 percent.

You have to realize all these practices developed because the rules made the securities business very expensive and that's what we're trying to address.

The central bank has been totally cognizant of the need to develop the debt side of the capital market. That is the last level we are working on. We are finished with the BIS and the valuation. The central bank has even allowed the issuance of bank notes, NCDs (negotiable certificates of deposits). These bank notes will develop the solvency position of banks.

Q: But the banks are still holding off the issuance of NCDs. Why haven't they started issuing these certificates if the rules were already in place?

A: We are still clarifying with the Bureau of Internal Revenue the regulations that will cover the instruments (NCDs) based on the Comprehensive Tax Reform Program. The CTRP allows the exemption of these issues, whether they are deposits or five-year investments, from withholding tax. This provision of the 1997 CTRP is expected to help in the development of long-term debt instruments, long-term savings and investments. The initial central bank circular allowed the exemption of non-negotiable time deposit.

Now, it has also allowed it for negotiable instruments of banks.

However, we wanted to get a clarification that this will not be limited to non-negotiable instruments.

We want the revenue regulation to form part of the Monetary Board resolution so there will be no question regarding the tax issues. When you start doing this business wherein you have to go to the public, you have to have a very clear tax environment.

Q: What other tax issues do you want the BIR to clarify and what issues need legislation?

A: To make the market dynamic, we have to create a kinder and more friendly trading environment and definitely the documentary stamp tax does not create that environment. It adds to the spread making the cost of liquidity more expensive.

I think that in a market that clearly needs the development of the liquidity spectrum, there is nothing wrong in creating a convention that should give some tax incentives not only to individuals but to certain institutions that can be very good participants such as insurance companies and institutional investors. Tax incentives should not be limited to bank issues. They should also cover the issuers that need longer-dated funds, including utilities and infrastructure-related certificate issuers.

Q: Can you give us a breakdown of investments per type of instrument?

A: That's very hard to say but knowing the size of the banks' balance sheets and the size of the instruments, only government securities are actively issued at this point. There is practically no private issue in the debt market, which basically shows that the local market is not a good source of medium-term funds. Most of our corporate accounts that are qualified for this have to go offshore for more than one year. This leads one to conclude that we urgently need to develop that side of the market locally, not only in relation to the conventions but also to the provision of the necessary forum for liquidity on trading. If you were to look at the size of the resource base, I think we have more than P2 trillion worth of deposits. As we move to the future, it would be nice to see the fixed-income market growing side by side with the deposit market. The growth should not be in the terms of the issues alone but also in the size of the investor base.

Q: How can these reforms help the economy move forward?

A: A well-developed or robust domestic debt market both for private and public debt issues will lessen the burden of the banks in financing development. It opens a direct access to the market for qualified issuers. But then you should not allow this to happen if there is no order or no platform that should provide a convention of these issues. Why? Because you will just 'burn' the public. That's the reason why I think the creation of the fixed income exchange is going to be very timely. We need alternative sources of funds outside banks. Although the transactions will be done through banks, the funds will not directly come from them.

Q: Would this also address the inherent mismatch between short-term funds, in the form of deposits, and long-term financing for long-term projects?

A: Short-term funds are more prevalent because we still don't have a secondary market. If you look at the yield curve, it will show that you have to pay a premium of easily 700 basis points between a 90-day financing and a five-year financing. That is because there is no secondary market. We have to put activity and depth in the secondary market so that your cost of liquidity on the long-term debt will not be very different from your short-term cost.

Q: Does this mean that people who will tap long-term borrowings will enjoy lower rates when the fixed-income exchange is established?

A: Theoretically a more robust secondary market brings down the cost of liquidity and the yield curve. The difference among your 90-day, one-year and five-year debts is actually the cost of liquidity. So the steeper it is shows the need to activate and develop the secondary markets so that the cost of liquidity will go down.

Q: How much would you say of the current financing is short-term and is long-term?

A: Well, in terms of the domestic currency-denominated financing, I would say 95 percent of all the banking activity outside of consumer loans—mortgages are the only loans right now that can command tenors of five to 10 years—is short term. Development, local currency project finance loans, infrastructure loans are not really present because of two things—first, there is no debt capital market to talk about and second, the deposit markets are likewise very short-term driven.

Q: The Philippine Stock Exchange has proposed to the Bureau of Treasury the trading of treasury bills on its own platform. Are you up to the competition?

A: In the case of the PSE, I think it's healthy, it's not competitive. Actually, they're going to open a new avenue.

Q: The government wants you and the PSE to work together on the development of the fixed-income exchange. What do you think about this?

A: There is no issue even if they (the brokers) will develop their own segment. However, putting the banks under the rules of the PSE with a different capital and regulatory requirements right now is so difficult. The brokers don't even have a minimum capital requirement. They're not even in the BIS standards. The brokers are not in the business as yet. I think it is healthier if they will develop their own through their own means and we also will move on. This is not because we want to be different from them but it is because we are cognizant of the fact that we are under an entirely different regulatory environment from that of the brokers. The banks right now do this business through their branch network and it is going to be difficult to put the banks under PSE rules at this point. These rules of the PSE on fixed income are not even developed yet. The banks, for their part, have already the most basic rules and these are the rules on valuation and BIS.

It will be hard for both of us to move forward with our different regulatory environment.

Q: There was a proposal from the stockbrokers for the BAP to use the PSE's trading platform. What happened to that proposal?

A: We are open to that but now they (PSE) are also saying they have to buy a new platform. At the end of the day it's not only technology that matters. The real concerns are the rule books and the basic regulatory environment. We have invited them to invest in the fixed-income exchange.

Q: What did they say?

A: I suppose they are still thinking about it. Honestly, I think they should concentrate on developing the equity markets. Also, we are starting this fixed-income exchange within the parameters of the Securities Regulation Code of 2000 wherein no industry can control more than 20 percent of a specific exchange. I think in that score, we will eventually be ahead of the exchange because they have yet break down their ownership to comply with the SRC.

Banks regaining appetite for vehicle financing

By Gil C. Cabacungan Jr.

THE LAST six years have proven that the automotive industry does live and die by automotive financing.

A glut in auto financing schemes propelled the industry's explosive growth in 1996 and the scarcity of these schemes precipitated the industry's breakdown in 1997. In the last two years, a steady growth in bank financing has kept the auto industry afloat amid weak consumer confidence and internal troubles facing the assemblers.

Mitsubishi Motors Philippines Corp. senior vice president Melchor R. Dizon said that more than ever, auto financing has become a more crucial factor to the industry's survival than it was during the pre-crisis period.

Dizon said that more than 60 percent of vehicles sold now was done through financing compared to only about 50 percent during the industry's peak. Dizon said interest rates on auto loans were now pegged at 13 to 15 percent, much lower than the 17 to 18 percent charged during the pre-crisis period.

Data from the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas showed that automotive loans surged 20.8 percent to P34.3 billion last year from P28.4 billion in 2000.

The robust growth in auto loans was registered in the face of an 8.7-percent drop in automotive sales to 76,670 units in 2001, which snapped the industry's modest recovery from 1999 to 2000.

Dizon said the rebound in automotive financing saved the day for the industry. "We could have fallen much deeper if banks were not willing to provide more loans to buyers."

An auto executive claimed that the drop in industry sales in 2001 was not due to the tapering off of demand but to production and delivery problems caused by labor issues in the assemblers' plants.

He said all of the top five assemblers were facing serious problems about their restive labor unions with two—Toyota and Nissan—forced to close their plants for two weeks to a month due to a strike.

Toyota Motor Philippines Corp. spokesperson Ariel de Jesus said there was a steady and significant improvement in lending to the automotive sector over the last two years.

"Banks have loosened up on their lending requirements to new car buyers. You've got a better chance of getting a loan approval now than three or four years ago," De Jesus said.

Hot money

Some of the hot foreign money which swamped the Philippines in the mid-1990s were funneled into financial services including auto loans which resulted to sales of 137,365 cars and commercial vehicles in 1996—the industry's highest ever annual turnover.

Those were the go-go days when banks were willing to lend at zero down payment or zero interest rate to practically anybody.

But banks immediately shifted their auto financing to low gear in the 1997 financial crisis after free-wheeling lending to new car buyers resulted into a pile-up of repossessed vehicles.

Smarting from the barrage of loan defaults in the Asian financial crisis, banks reined in their auto financing windows by limiting their lending to between 40 and 50 percent of the vehicle's value; charging high interest rates; shortening the maturity period of loans to a maximum of three years, and scrutinizing thoroughly the borrower's background.

This move crippled the industry in 1997 and 1998 considering that more than half of sales were done through credit with only a fraction paid in cash. Due to the uncertainty brought by the financial crisis, not to mention the political crisis that the Philippines went through, even those who have the cash to burn chose to wait out until the storm was over.

An auto executive said that it took at least three years for the banks to clear up their books of loan defaults and repossessed vehicles, the same time it took them to regain their confidence to open their doors to car buyers again. But he said it was well worth the wait.

Now, newspapers are flush with full page ads of easy financing schemes from zero interest rates, low down payments and monthly payments, hefty discounts, interesting freebies including insurance and registration, and up to six years of financing. This and the release of new models and fresh variants have given the industry a much-needed shot in the arm as it moved close to a full recovery starting next year.

Although sales have yet to reach pre-crisis levels, the Philippine automotive industry is already looking at the worst of its troubles from the rear view mirror.

Latest data from the Chamber of Automotive Manufacturers of the Philippines Inc. showed positive results for the industry as sales climbed 5.9 percent to 24,496 units from January to April this year from 23,134 units during the same period last year.

Low interest rates

Among the factors that contributed to the growth of auto lending was the continued decline in interest rates, particularly in the past 12 months. This has prompted more banks to look for consumer lending opportunities, such as automotive financing, to make up for eroding profits from their investments in Treasury bills and currency transactions.

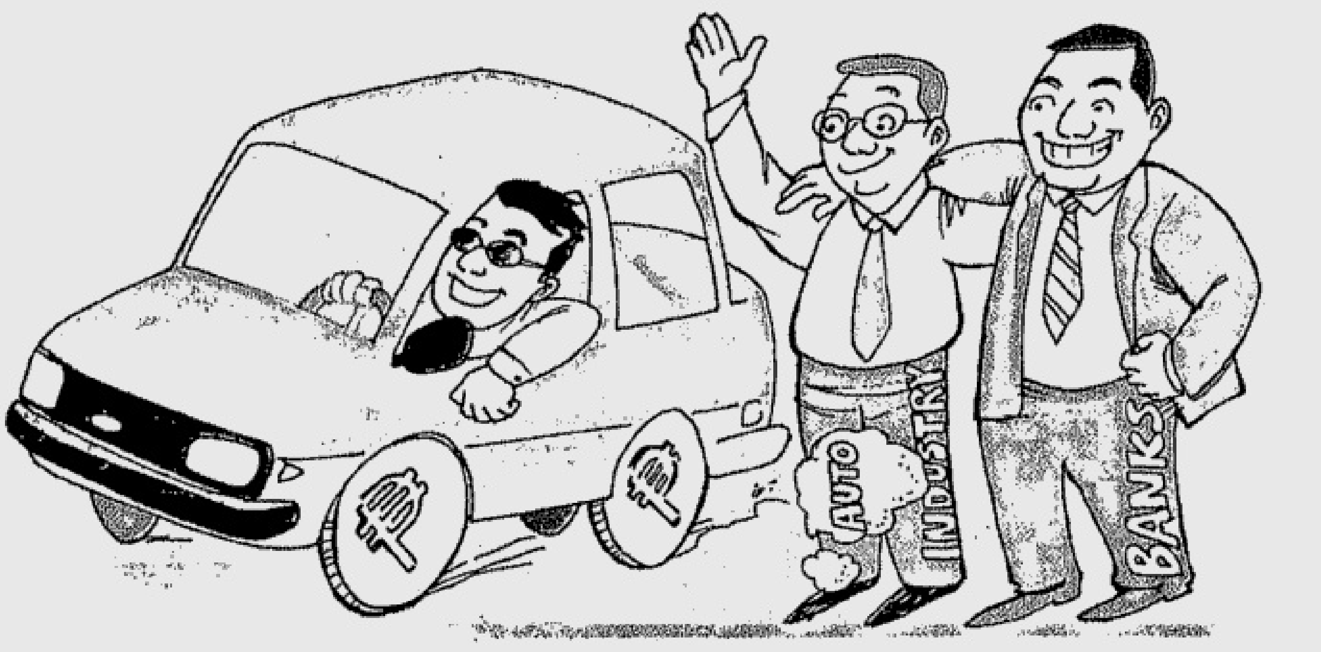
Dizon said auto financing was the "fastest and easiest" way to ramp up a bank's loan portfolio. "Banks prefer to deal in car loans than in housing mortgages because the risks are more manageable and well spread."

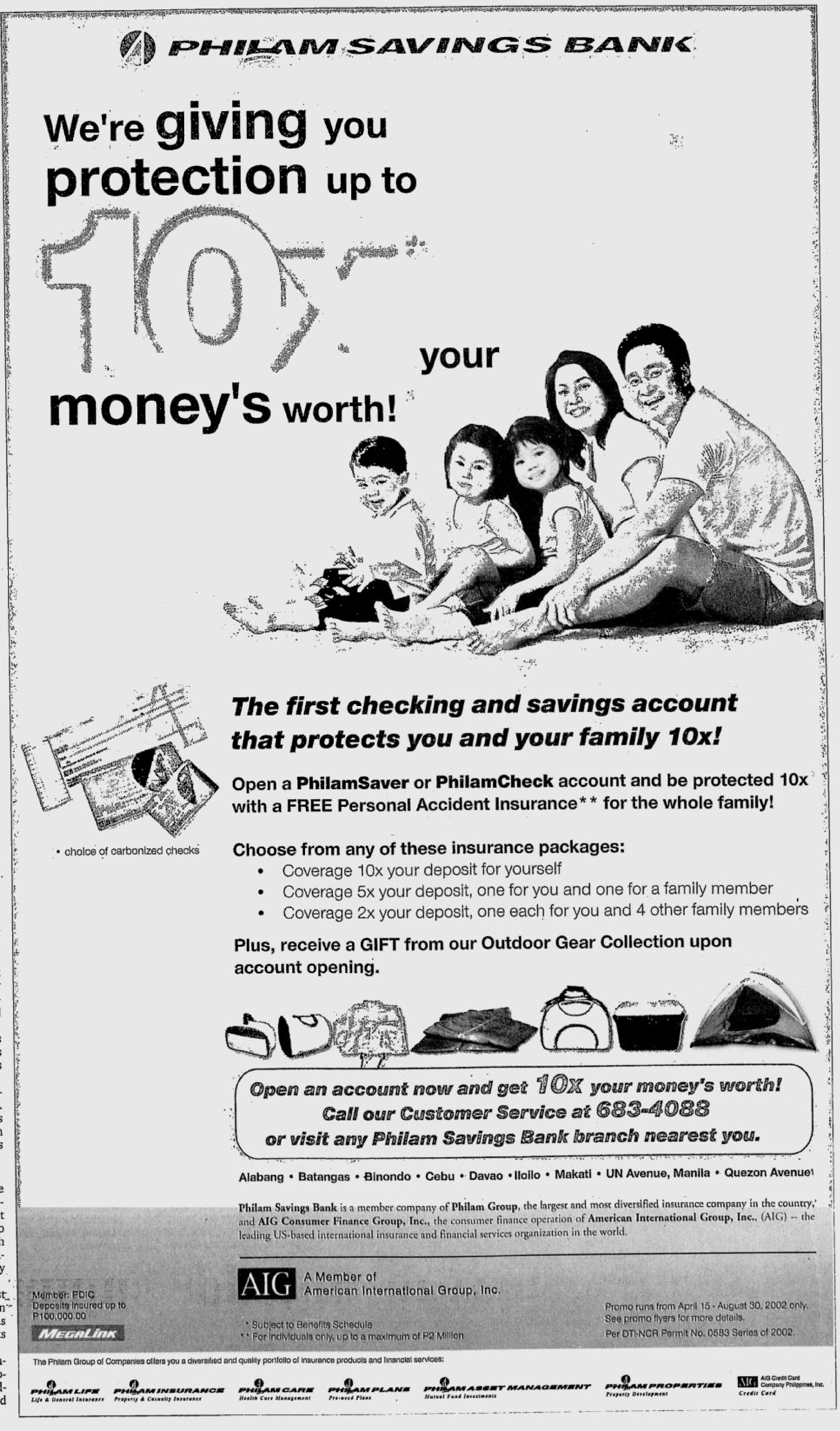
Low margins, low demand and tight competition in the wholesale or high-end corporate lending market has made consumer lending a savory alternative for medium-sized commercial banks and thrift banks.

De Jesus said banks were also spurred to lend to new vehicle buyers by the assemblers that agreed to subsidize part of the financing costs on top of the discounts and freebies they give to attract more people into their dealer showrooms. Assemblers used their close ties with the country's major banking groups as leverage to gain more access to financing schemes.

Roughly 70 percent of the loans last year were extended by thrift banks notably BPI Family Savings Bank, RCBC Savings Bank, and Philippine Savings Bank. All three banks are controlled by business groups that have interests in vehicle assembly—BPI's Ayala (Honda); RCBC's Yuchengco (Honda), and PSBank's George Ty (Toyota Motor Philippines Corp.).

Owing to the critical role of financing in their sales, De Jesus said Toyota was planning to put up a separate company that would centralize all financing requirements of their dealers nationwide. De Jesus said the move should further reduce the cost of auto financing for their buyers.

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'I'm mad as HELL, and I can't take it anymore

YEAH, scream, let it all out. For in this issue, 2bU! plumbs into the depths of madness and other insanities to show you that to be not-normal is normal after all

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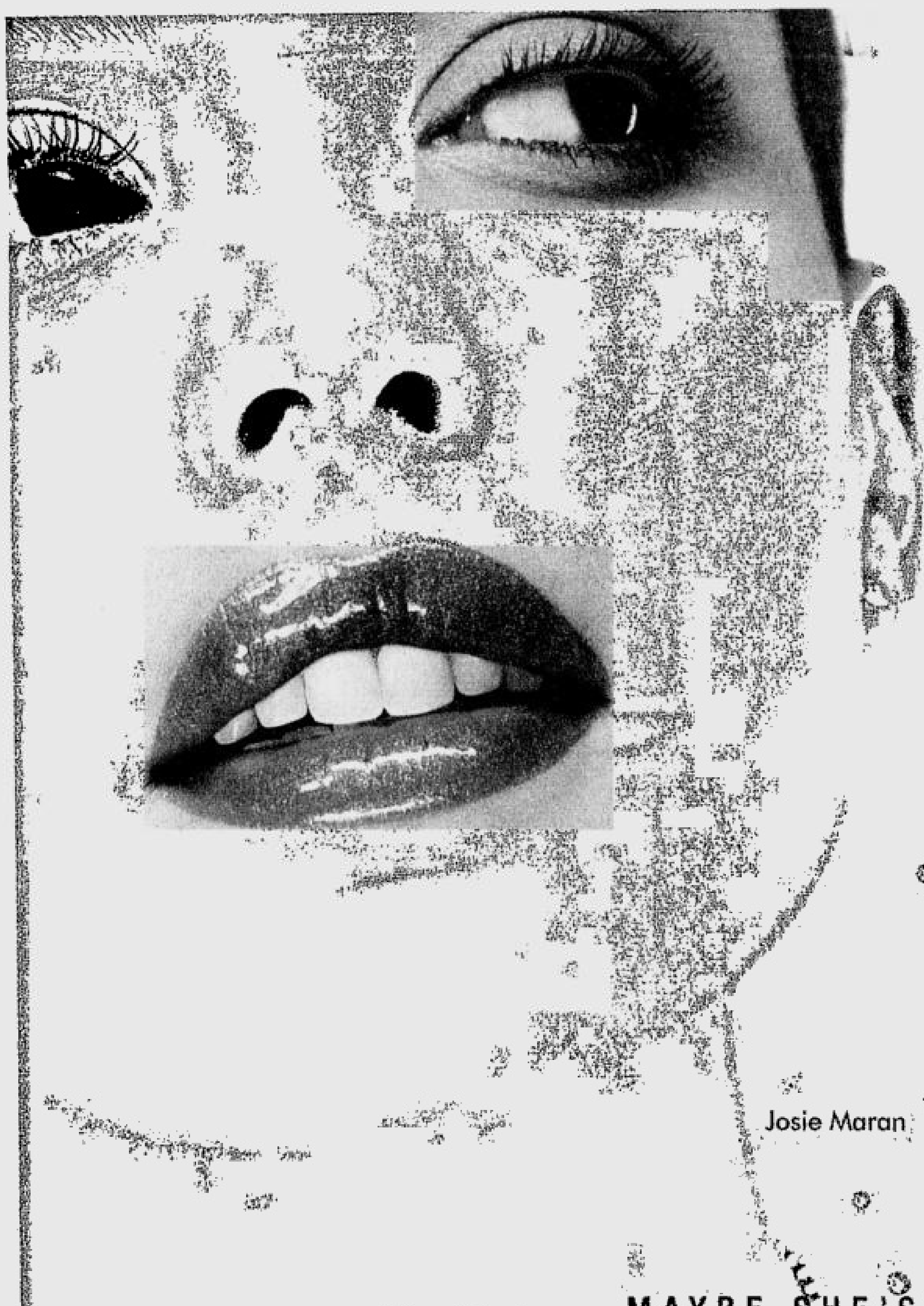
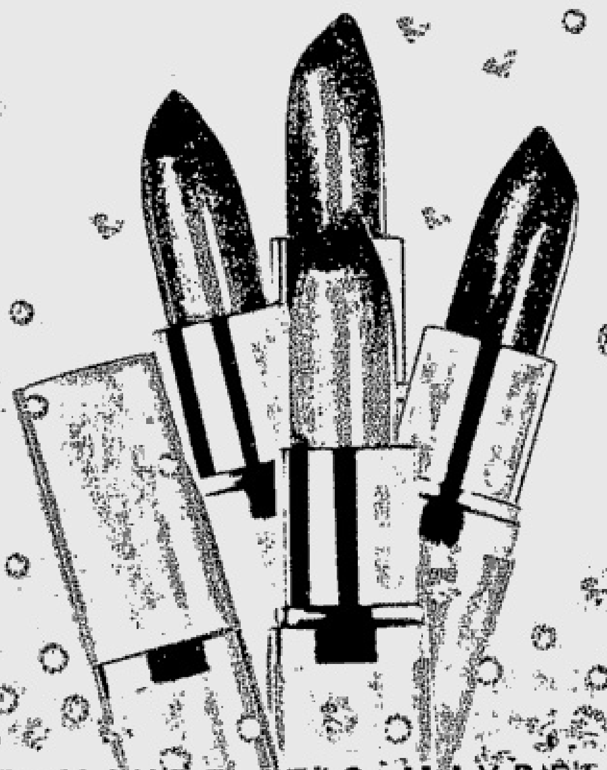
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Media madness

The lure of craziness has seeped into almost every form of media

By Catherine Young
2bU! Correspondent

THE LURE of the crazy and the unknown is irresistible. Today, a little bit of craziness is appreciated. Madness connotes character, which probably explains the appeal it has in the media. In a sense, we are mad about madness. We seek to release our inhibitions and free ourselves from the norm. Below are just examples of the mad things we love:

Mad mag: Mad Magazine

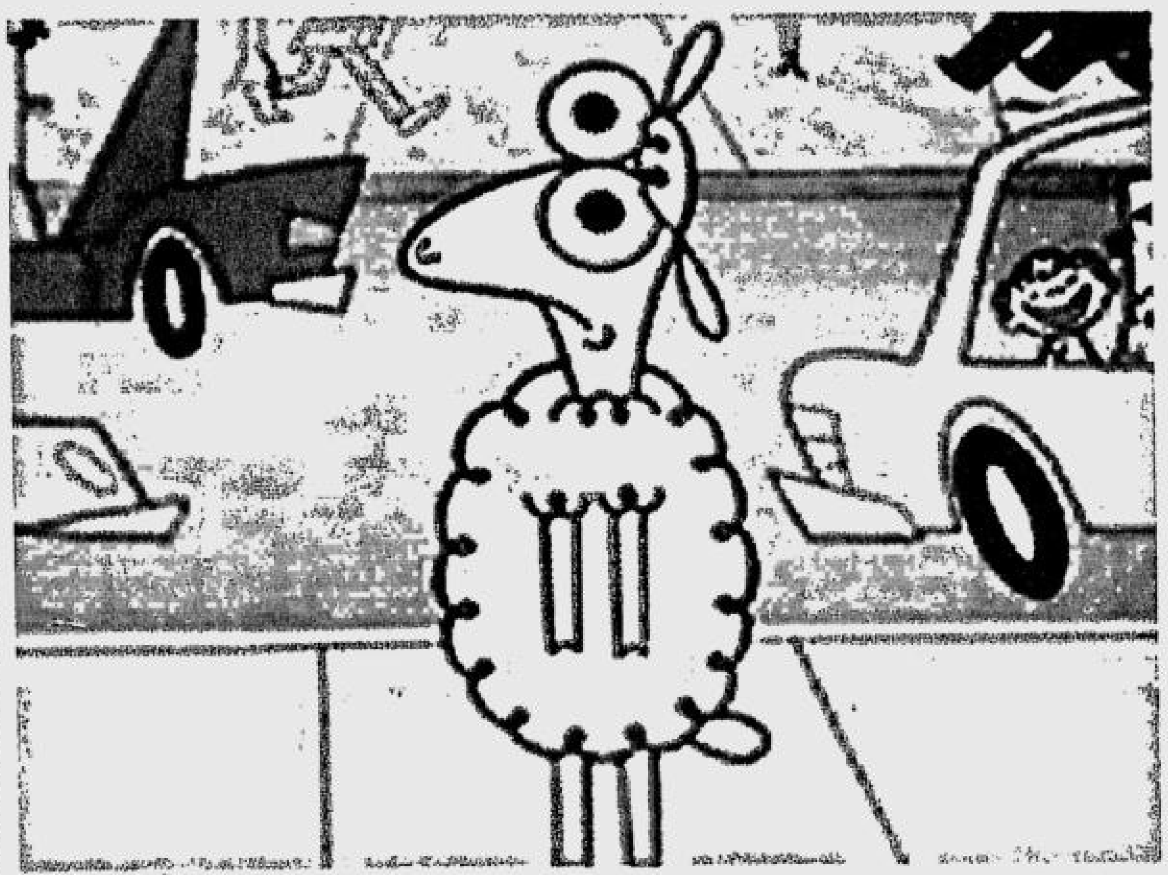
Mad Magazine has been around for decades, but it still captures a large international audience. This is greatly attributed to Alfred E. Neuman, that crazy character who appears in every issue. Gap-toothed and goofy grinned, he comes across as an idiot with humorous yet thought-provoking words of wisdom, such as "Smoking helps you lose weight—one lung at a time!" or "How come stealing from one book is plagiarism, but stealing from many is research?" I used to be afraid of his face when I was younger; now he has become my cartoon icon. The magazine itself is hilarious and irreverent, parodying everything from George W. Bush's environmental plan to the new Superman TV series "Smallville." The artwork alone is worthy of the P180 price tag. It won't make you cancel your subscription to The Economist, but it will guarantee a few laughs after a long day.

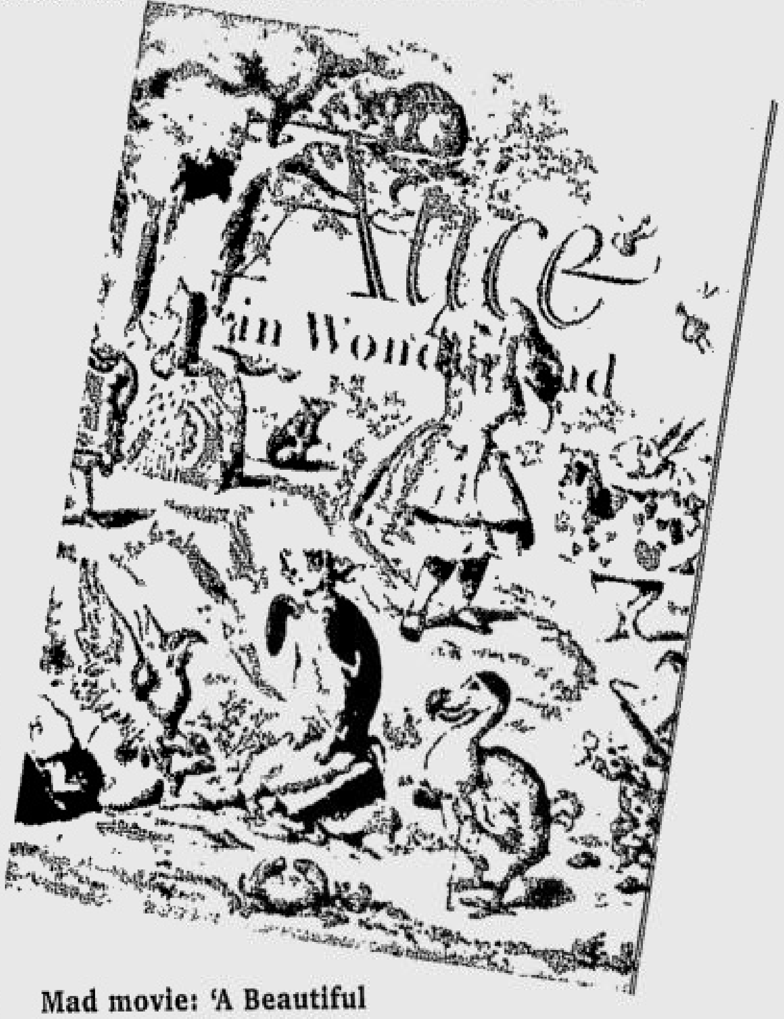
Mad site: http://www.msu.edu/user/loossean/erin/pursan.html

This page gives you a chance to find out how insane you are. While the layout may not be particularly exceptional, but it is oddly interesting to know how you measure up to the test. After answering its 55 questions, I am supposedly 32.7% insane and "slightly batty."

Mad TV: 'MTV's Jackass'

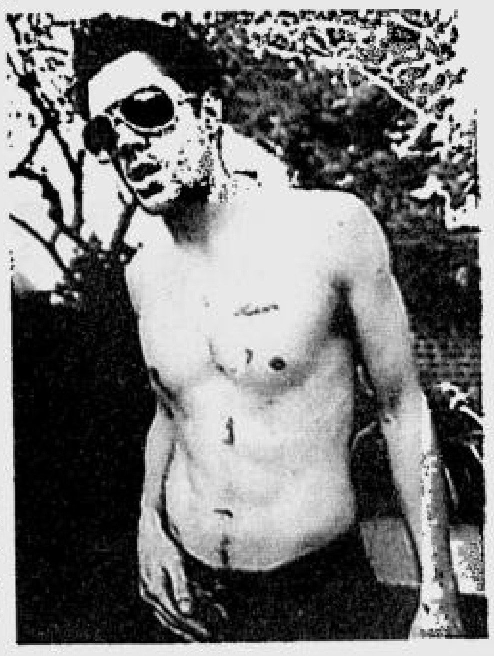
Any show that tries to capture its audience through strange stunts and oftentimes disgusting escapades has got to have some degree of madness to it. The same might be said for the successful cable channel that has to fund this crazy cast. The idea of doing things that are out of the ordinary and at times taboo is probably what constitutes its appeal with its large audience. Although I'm not a fan, I did watch one particular show—the "Cup Test" episode, in which a cast member tries the strength and tolerance of his groin through horrific kinds of penile torture. Even the female audience could have felt the pain. Intellectually stimulating? Heck, no, although physics enthusiasts might find it interesting. Stupid? Maybe. Mad? Definitely.





Mad movie: 'A Beautiful Mind'

They say genius is madness, and it cannot be better exemplified than in the Oscar winner for best picture, "A Beautiful Mind." Russell Crowe plays John Forbes Nash, Jr., a mathematical genius whose brilliant discovery makes him win the Nobel Prize. His life, however, takes a sudden ironic turn when his mind collapses and he becomes schizophrenic. He learns through his wife Alicia (Jennifer Connelly) that what is real is in the heart. Russell Crowe might not have won the Oscar, but he has won over the audience with his stunning performance.



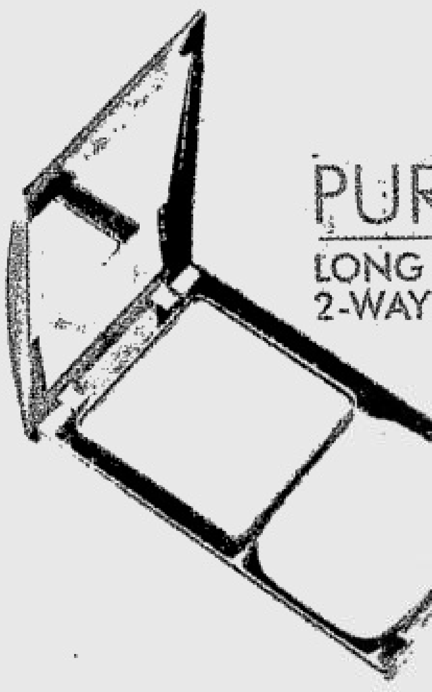
Mad book: 'Alice in Wonderland'

Few people of our generation can say that they have actually read the Lewis Carroll text, rather than simply watched the Disney cartoon when they were 8 or the recent 1999 Hallmark version. Then again, reading it when you're a little older is probably better because you get to deconstruct the symbols replete throughout the novel. Falling into the rabbit hole is the least strange incident that befalls Alice; she has to encounter unusual physics-defying things and meet all kinds of quirky characters—the Mad Hatter, the March Hare and the Queen of Hearts. Most intriguing would be the tea party scene where Carroll takes an established Victorian institution (tea time) and turns it into a scene that borders on the irrational and the insane, with only Alice to remind readers of what "normal" is.

Mad cartoon: 'Sheep in the Big City'

The premise for this Cartoon Network show is enough to watch it at least once. Sheep is the only one of his kind in existence; he is hunted by the Top Secret Military Organization so that they can complete the construction of a sheep-powered ray gun. Moving to the big city to hide from the seemingly demented General Specific and his henchman Private Public is not an easy task. Problems with apartments, his social life and Lady Richington's wig-bashing tendencies give way to many hilarious, if not odd, episodes. The madness of the characters seems the show's main weapon against the frivolities of modern society.

E-mail the author at unicorn@csi.com.ph



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From the loony bin and back

By Bunny Anne Gapit
2bU! Correspondent

MY MIND reeled. We, the Psychology seniors, were slated to hold our practicum at the National Center for Mental Health, and there was no escaping that unless we shifted courses and start from the scratch. Suddenly, there were two flashbulb reminiscences of my past: one of a woman lunatic who broke a crock into bits using my pitiable brother's little head (like she was reliving the *pukpok-palayok* days of her childhood) and another, of our crazy helper who was an inch close to hitting my face with a pungent Modess pad, freshly pulled from her undergarment (she probably thought we were playing touchball, what do you think?)

I cringed at these memories and felt like backing out. But when I saw all my batchmates seemingly determined to brave this requirement, I knew I was left without a choice. Never mind if it was rumored that among the asylum's resident-patients were the butchers responsible for the celebrated murders of the time. Never mind too, that I was scared out of my wits when a friend relayed that her patient ripped his girlfriend's nipples and flushed them down the toilet.

So came the training. I was assigned to the first pavilion where the acute male adult patients were. Admittedly, I didn't know how to go about my job. Oftentimes, I just stood on ceremony administering the exams, too cautious not to ruffle the ex-

FROM/ p.D3

ILLUSTRATION: ALBERT RODRIGUEZ

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From the loony bin and back

From page D2

aminees or wound their sensibilities.

Breaking the ice

Surprisingly, the days unfolded and the place gradually ceased to become a terrifying place for me. One day, I just found myself having a rare time—I agreed to dance "Too Close" in the pavilion's monthly social therapy program. A sexy intermission for the whole mentally unsound to see!

The residents of the pavilion were a diverse lot. There was Raquel, who, fresh from labor pains, rehearsed the same grievances time and again (*"Busted ako kay Jeff!"*—Jeff was her baby's father). There was Venus, the pretty catatonic who was always in the nude and who went into raptures by the mere sight of doughnuts. There was Mayo who cried our names out loud when we left him, his shrill scream still ringing in my ears. There was Rosario who sniffed at the test papers and romped through her exams. There was Mang Augusto, who gave us a hard time because of his antics. There was Buddy, rowdily gay in his tender years who fancied himself to be the long lost son of directors Marilou Diaz Abaya and Deo Fajardo. There was Peter with his endless demands for his food. There was Filano who was always goofing around the pavilion.

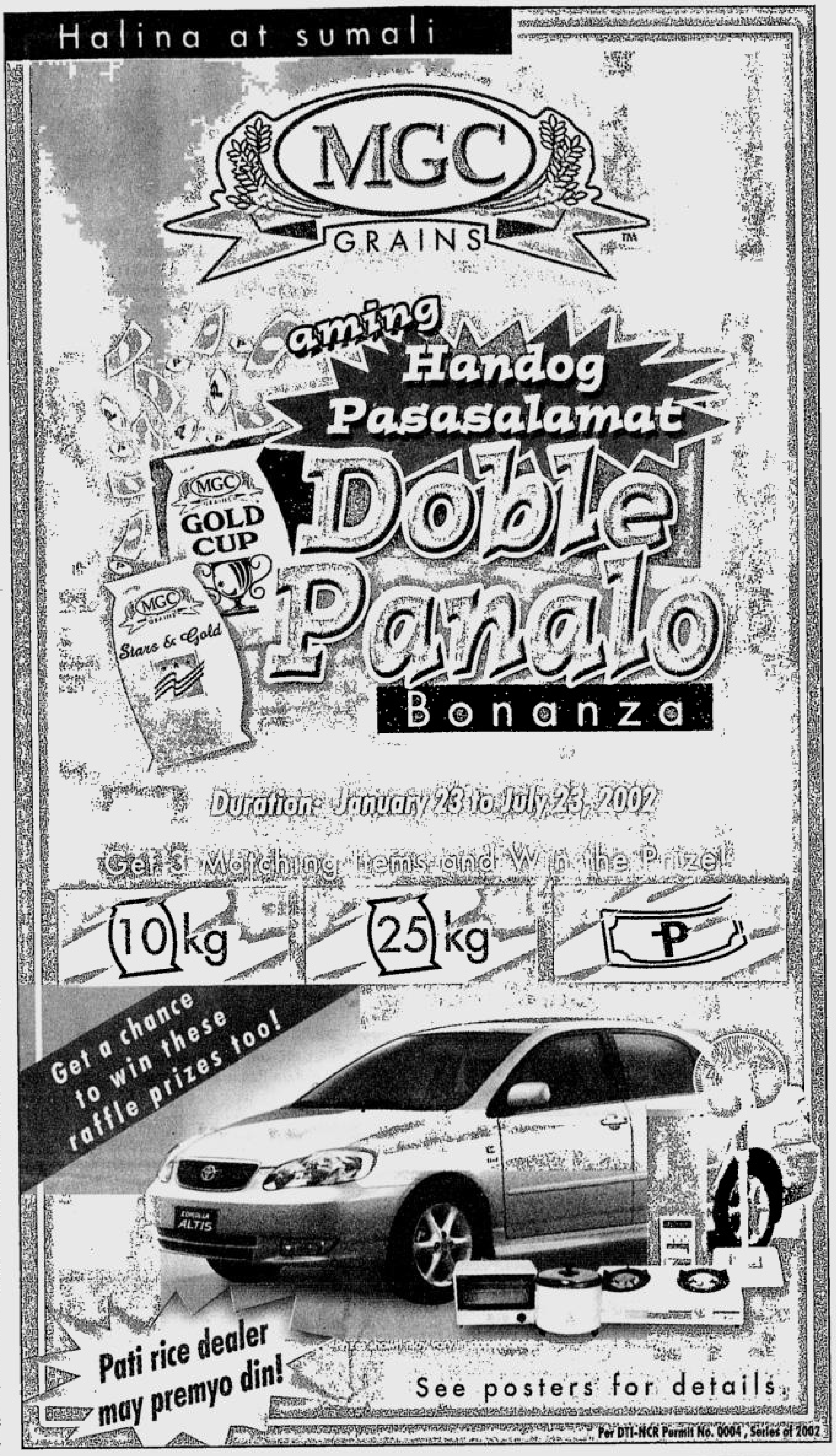
Missing them

It has been three years now since I last set foot on that pavilion, yet I still remember them as characters of true strength and endurance. I miss the pavilion's sickly smell, the Tarzan cries, even the heads banging on the wall, and the bathing nudes in the open field. I miss watching my patients taking delight at the food. Because out here, people can be cold-hearted, skeptical and dubious. I miss being there because it's actually far complicated and madder here.

* * *

Single out your guy

WHO is your choice? The witty Joel, the sweet Marvel or the cocky Lee? You may vote for your chosen guy via text or through website. Send TV SINGLE-<name of chosen guy> and send to 2333 for Globe users and 288 for Smart users or by visit www.single.com.ph. Watch the first episode of Single (which will include clips of this interview) on May 23, 9:30 p.m. at ABC 5.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SPORTY style of Pia Cabreira

FACE OF F1. New model Jordan dons Fila's latest.

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F YOU! Angel Agustin dons the F logo.

FAST-FORWARD to the finish line for Noelle Alviar

SCUBA SPORTS. U man Joel Tantoco

FILA FIGHTERS. Frederiko Galang and Albert Adrales

NEW FACES. Chase Tinio, a 17-year-old tennis champion, and 22-year-old Swedish hunk Sten Tillberg

PHOTOS BY TIM YAP

The 'F' word

Tim Yap

WHILE others prefer to "swoosh" it, or say, bask in their three-striped sports tradition, this athletic gear global giant opts to remain true to its Italian roots of focused fun while being true to the sport—in true Fila style.

Sportswear is indeed for the sturdy—from athletes to partyphiles, this pursuit of perfection, whether for sport or for style, is the common denominator among people nowadays, when the first thing that one notices is whether another has gained or lost a few pounds or what the other is wearing. This attitude is what makes a lot of urbanites prefer to stay home and not go out and face the harsh realities of a judgmental world.

"Not going out is the new going out," my friend once told me. For some, this holds true. Or they just go out if there is an event worth their while. Last Tuesday at Venezia, the scene's movers, hipsters and shakers went all out when Fila gave a welcome party to the press and their VIPs to introduce the newest member of their league—**Michael Schumacher** for the F1 Ferrari line, and **Donita Rose** as their newest celebrity endorser!

The event started with show biz' most admired person, **Boy Abunda**, holding a private conversation with F lady boss **Cris Albert**, who spoke about her "dream team"—stylist **Patrick Rosas**, designer **Noni Diza** (who now oversees Fila's style statements—will he do a **Marc Jacobs** with this sportswear brand?) and Donita.

Donita has now embraced the sporty lifestyle, for even prior to her Fila endorsement, she has been religiously going to the gym, tightening her muscles with the help of a trainer in Singapore. Young designer Diza, a one-time Mega young designer awardee, has a following with the city's fashionista set with his edgy funk.

Cris' hubby **Butch** table-hopped to ensure their guests were having a ball while son **Carlo** watched his parents with amazement. Sister **Ana Bitong** was on hand taking care of Fila's other athletic endorsers and special guests. Doyenne **Wanda Louwallien** was there to give her daughters her fullest support; incidentally, it was also her birthday.

Talk about speedy entrances, Ms Rose made hers aboard a—what else? A red hot Ferrari, with **Louie Y** as her chauffeur slash escort. Later, male and female models paraded around the bar and outside the venue to show us how sportswear has evolved. Fun and flashy were the red Fila Ferrari limited edition sneaks, Schumacher racing jackets, F logo-ed gym shirts, pants and jackets, caps and wristbands—we can now wear it from the gym to the street and beyond. Hip, hip, hip. If only I could award them with medals for style-savvy sports consciousness.

Folded and hung

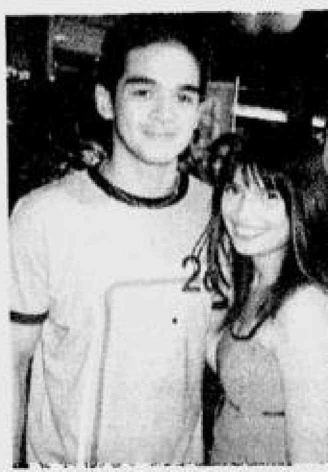
Tonight, the 6750 Ayala Avenue, a hot spot that used to be popular among "long-necked" partyphiles, has woken up from its deep slumber. Now renamed Dream Bar, it looks more like a postmodern Travessia (remember that place?) meets JJ's at the Grand Hyatt Hong Kong. Perfect for chilling out, it even has a grand piano on an elevated part of the bar where a Sinatra soundalike performer belts it out during happy hour.

Later at night, DJ **Cocoy Puyat** takes over to spin his musical magic. Interesting also is Dream Bar's wall sculptures of half man-half beasts. Its opening tonight expects to draw the city's partyphiles and the others who have forgotten how it is to go out and have fun in the city. Let's dream together!

Thursday is the opening of Greenbelt 3 cinema wing where an invitational screening of the new "Star Wars" will be shown. Friday it's the turn of Greenbelt 2, the next hip haven for urbanites looking for more. Also at 6 p.m. that same day, Coca-Cola launches its latest variant in Manila—Coke Light! This hipster event happens at the NBC Tent.

Friday night's climax comes when the new faces of Folded & Hung, or F&H as it is popularly known, are introduced. **Raya Mananquil**, **Brian Tan**, **Dean Hinkley**, **David Tuppen** and **Nadya Cross** are all admirable individuals who have achieved so much early in their young life. It also helps that they all look great, too. This hip brand developed by **Ronald Pineda** (who seems to possess that Midas touch) launched the career of model **Christian Vasquez**, so let's watch out for them.

This **Jackie Aquino**-directed spectacle that will highlight the new guard will be at the West Drive area fronting Venezia and Buddha Bar. Saturday at the NBC Tent, MTV-Smart and Big Fish bring back Gatecrasher, that UK club that had a lot of us gnashing it out. So what are we waiting for? Better jog those extra pounds off and get ourselves fit for the coming carousel of hip happenings and fun functions. Catch ya later, partyphiles!

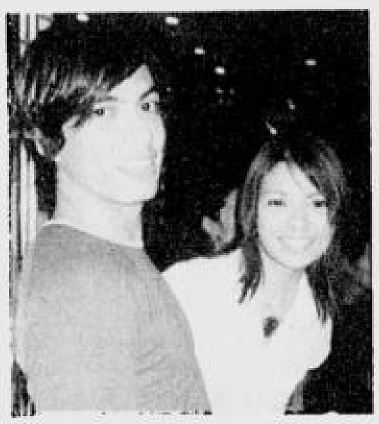


VANILLA SKY. Javi Rodriguez and Ayen Santos

MUSE AMUSED. Fila files Elmer Lago and Chris Jackson with Ana Bitong

FILA FAMILY. Donita Rose, Cris Albert and son Carlo

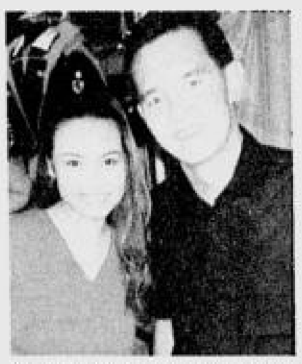
FILL ME UP. Kenji Marquez and Rain Ranin at the race track



SIBLING REVELRY. Twin endorsers Robby Mananquil and Rissa Samson

FAST-FORWARD. Donita Rose inside the Louie Y-driven Ferrari

F DUDES. Jeff Hidalgo and Lance Raymundo spell f-u-n!



BODY BUDDY. Maradee de Guzman and Philip Cu-Unjieng

FOLDED AND HUNG. Ronald Pineda with new image models Brian Tan and Raya Mananquil, to be launched this Friday at G2's West Drive

TRIPLE SCORE. Manolo Llamas, Jay Tugas and Tessa Dragon

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Spicy and sensual scent for men

Kinny Salas

THERE'S a trend for men's fragrance this month—three prominent ones in the market. There's one from Mont Blanc, another from Paco Rabanne (Ultraviolet for Men) and one more from Lancôme (Miracle Homme).

I was invited at the launch of Lancôme's Miracle Homme so this is the only one I can review in detail. What was different about this launch at Rockwell's Mati restaurant was it was more than just presenting a product. There were four good-looking men who were vying for the "miracle man" title in the Philippines—Juan Miguel Ongsiako, Fitz Puyat, Jami Rocha and Domini Primero. Each represented the target market for the fragrance—24-35 years old—and all are successful in their chosen fields.

The guests were asked to bid for the men through small donations, with the proceeds going to the charity of Bea Araneta. The charity's name, coincidentally, is called the Little Miracles Foundation, and it aims to send at least five children to school. Lancôme has already set aside the money and what was earned that evening was an extra.

Mati restaurant is also part of the tie-up. Every time someone purchases a miracle wine, he contributes to someone's education.

The fragrance is described as a tangible and lively expression of sunrise. It is a vibrant combination that is spicy and woodsy with fresh, vivid and sensual accents. The scent is definitely very male. There's no hope for it to be a unisex fragrance because of the woodsy notes.

I envision men in suits, or men seriously on romantic evening dates. Definitely not for teens or men who lack confidence. Like women's perfume, this is a bit strong for day unless one wears it a couple of hours before stepping out or applies a very tiny amount so there is just a hint of fragrance. Price: P1,800 for 1.7 oz, P3,200 for 3.4 oz.

Tips for men

Men are a little bit vainer than they used to. Since it is still summer (read: beach season), I see a lot of impulsive exercises. Most men take up running because walking makes them impatient and the gym is too much of a hassle for them. Besides, running is the fastest way to burn off fat and drop the weight. Unfortunately, there are different sets of health rules if you are running during summer.

- Lower your expectations. Your heart literally beats faster in high heat as it is pumping extra blood out to the skin to enhance cooling. You won't run as fast so don't try to.
- Know where and how far you are going to run. A very hot day is not the time to experiment with a new route where you may get lost or go without fluids for long periods.
- Acclimate to the heat. It takes anywhere from 10 days to two weeks to get used to the temperature, especially if you're just starting. Do not run longer than 30 minutes during the acclimation period. During this time your body becomes more efficient at cooling and learns to produce more sweat to cool you off. Warning: You have to run daily as much as possible because if you miss five to six days in succession, you have to start all over because your body will be unacclimatized.
- Get plenty of fluids before, during and after the run. Two glasses before running, 18 oz cup after 15-20 minutes and another after the run.
- Run early in the morning or late in the day. The sun is hottest between 8 a.m.-4 p.m., and your performance will really be poor if you run between those hours, and risk sunstroke. Note: Mornings are humid and pollen count rises so your allergies may get worse. The good news is the pollution is lower. Late afternoon has less humidity, but the pollution is higher. Choose a better time.

For questions or products you want to road-test, write to Makeover 911, PDI Lifestyle or fax to 897-4805

Why I see a shrink

By Alexis Taylor
2bU! Correspondent

"TELL me about your family," my college counselor told me. It was my first year in college, and already a nosy twentysomething guidance counselor, who picked my name at random, was asking me about my family.

"I come from a dysfunctional family," I said out flatly, itching to leave the room. I hate, hate, *hate* people who think they can lend a "helping hand," when all they really do is sit in front of you, nod a lot, pretend to sympathize, and cap off the session with an "I totally understand, everything will be okay" statement. That last few words just make me want to whip up a paper bag from my back pocket and throw up.

I don't know if it was my wanting to be excused from my History class or that I wanted to have a little fun with the counselor. But after her squeezing me to tell her why I looked so lowly on my family (guidance counselors never seem to understand the phrase "It's a long story, maybe some other time"), I told her why. I told her the summary of my life. I told her the groundbreaking story of why my family was so dysfunctional, why we always seem to have to walk on eggshells, why I thought it was just right for my siblings to all die a slow and painful death. Hey, she asked for it. And after I said my piece, she was staring at me, dumbfounded at how I summed up my answer in less than a minute without even stopping to breathe. Clearing her throat, she leaned over to me, her face morphing into a big, sunny smile.

"So tell me, do you have any boyfriends?" she asked, all perky. I blinked. Twice. Looks like we got the family situation out of the picture in less than three minutes. I knew she felt like a failure, that this was one of those cases that she would never be able to help out with (but then again, do they really get to solve any non-school related problems?). I decided to make her sleep better that night.

"It's alright. I have a shrink. And no, I don't have a boyfriend. Can I go now?"

Mom's friend

I've been seeing a shrink since I was 5 or 7 years old. Back then I didn't know she was a shrink—I just thought she was a friend of my mom's, someone who loved playing board games and Go Fish with me. I remember going to her place and playing with the German Shepherd that she had, and always wondering why she wore white from head to toe. Whenever I felt bad and depressed (at such a young age, yes, I was already depressed), my mother would take me to her, and we'd play cards all day. My mom told me her job was to listen to people's problems and help these people out. I thought that such was needed, that the world absolutely had to have more psychologists in the world. So as a child, I wanted to be a psychologist.

I've come across a handful of people who ask in disbelief why on earth do I see a shrink from time to time. "Are you mental? Are you suicidal? Are you on medication? Do you get medication for free?" are just some of the questions I get. And when I tell them I've been going to her since before I could write in script, they would flip and declare me unstable. Well at least I know *I'm* unstable—how about *you*?

I have to admit, even though it helps that someone's listening to me, it feels crappy that I have to pay someone to listen to my problems. I swear to God sometimes I catch her looking at the clock, watching the minutes slowly crawl by to the end of our session. Even once, while shopping, I spotted her and called her name. I swear by my entire CD collection that she ran the opposite direction.

So why do I even bother seeing a shrink?

Blessed

I was blessed as a child to have tons of insecurity problems. In school I was always emotionally picked on, and thanks to my wonderful guidance counselors, I wasn't spared from constant grilling sessions, either. People bugged the hell out of me during my parents' separation ("It's not your fault, don't ever think it's you're fault." Yeah right, like that ever crossed my mind). You know how you always seem to keep that security blanket you've always had since you were little? That's my shrink. When I was young I always went to her place to find solace from the bullies, to realize what has been bugging me, and to know that what I'm going through isn't abnormal.

To this day I still drop by her place from time to time. I don't cry my eyes out over mean girls who didn't talk to me in school, or my insensitive siblings who probably didn't care if I were alive or not. Nowadays I bawl my eyes out over my overprotective mother, the immature members of society, and what I'm going to do with my life. Which is a beautiful thing—this woman knows everything I've been through, and everything my family has been through. To her, it's just putting together the missing pieces and showing it to me, so I get to see the bigger picture.

I would recommend everyone to see a shrink. Even if they're 100-percent sure that they're "stable." Even when they're not stressed out or bugged by life's unexpected presents. Shrinks aren't only for the depressed, for the mentally insane, or for those penning their Last Will and Testaments at the age of 17 with a cabinet full of sleeping pills and tequila.

My shrink doesn't solve my problems. I pay her a four-digit sum every hour for her to listen, analyze and, thank God, not tell me that everything will be all right—just that I should think things over and not let them bother me so much. She agrees with my opinions and finds ways to make her ideas go smoothly with mine. While guidance counselors say byè-bye after a year, my shrink has been with me for more than 10 years.

And no, I am not a on medication, I am not addicted to Dorms, and my suicidal tendencies aren't even close to hurting myself. Although I still feel the urge to slam people's faces on the pavement, and I do believe certain people should die a slow, painful death. But no, I'm not mad. Not in that Jekyll and Hyde sort of way, anyway.

So, to my dear guidance counselor—you didn't fail. I'm just a little... well... crazier than the others.

E-mail the author at kinnersly@hotmail.com

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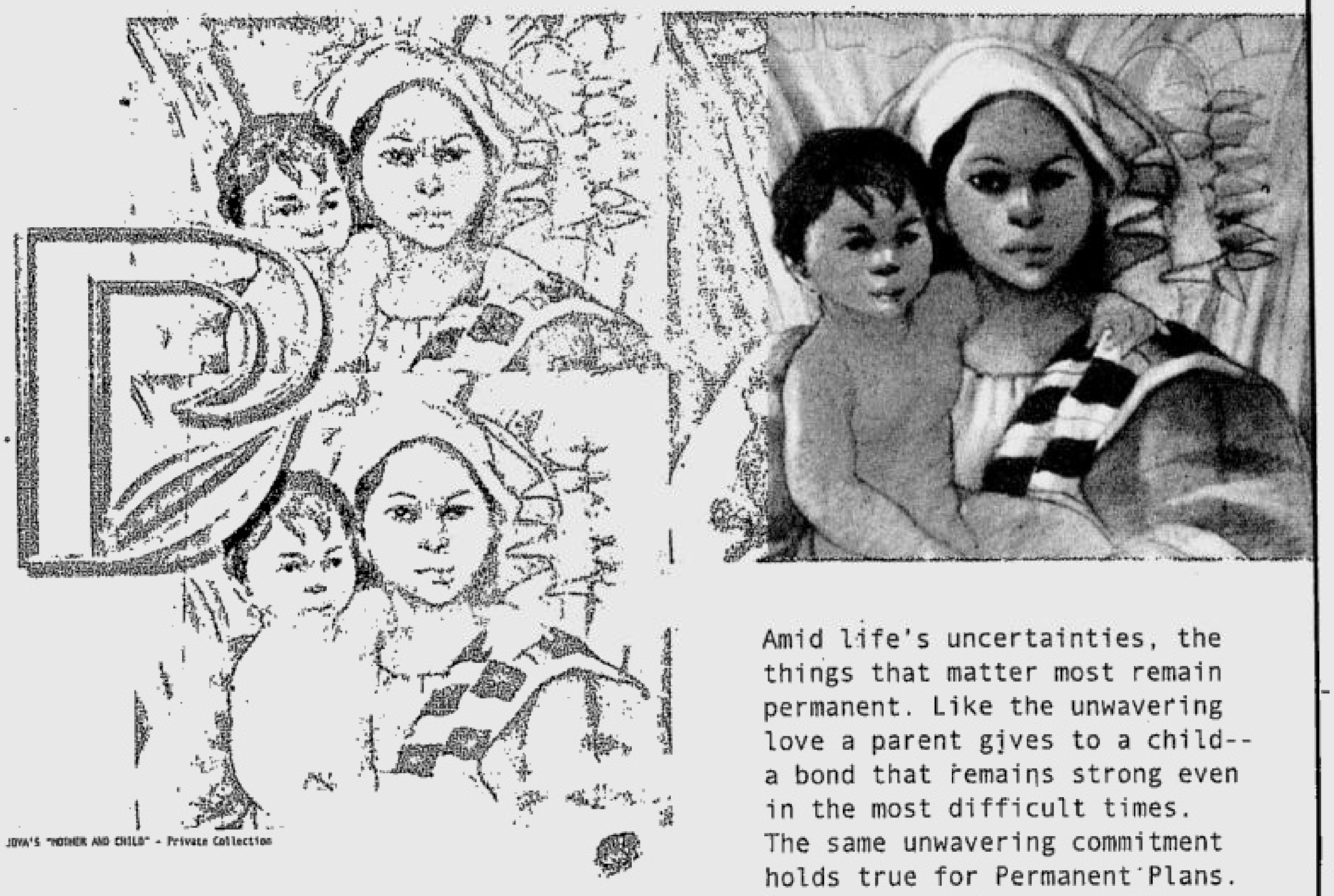

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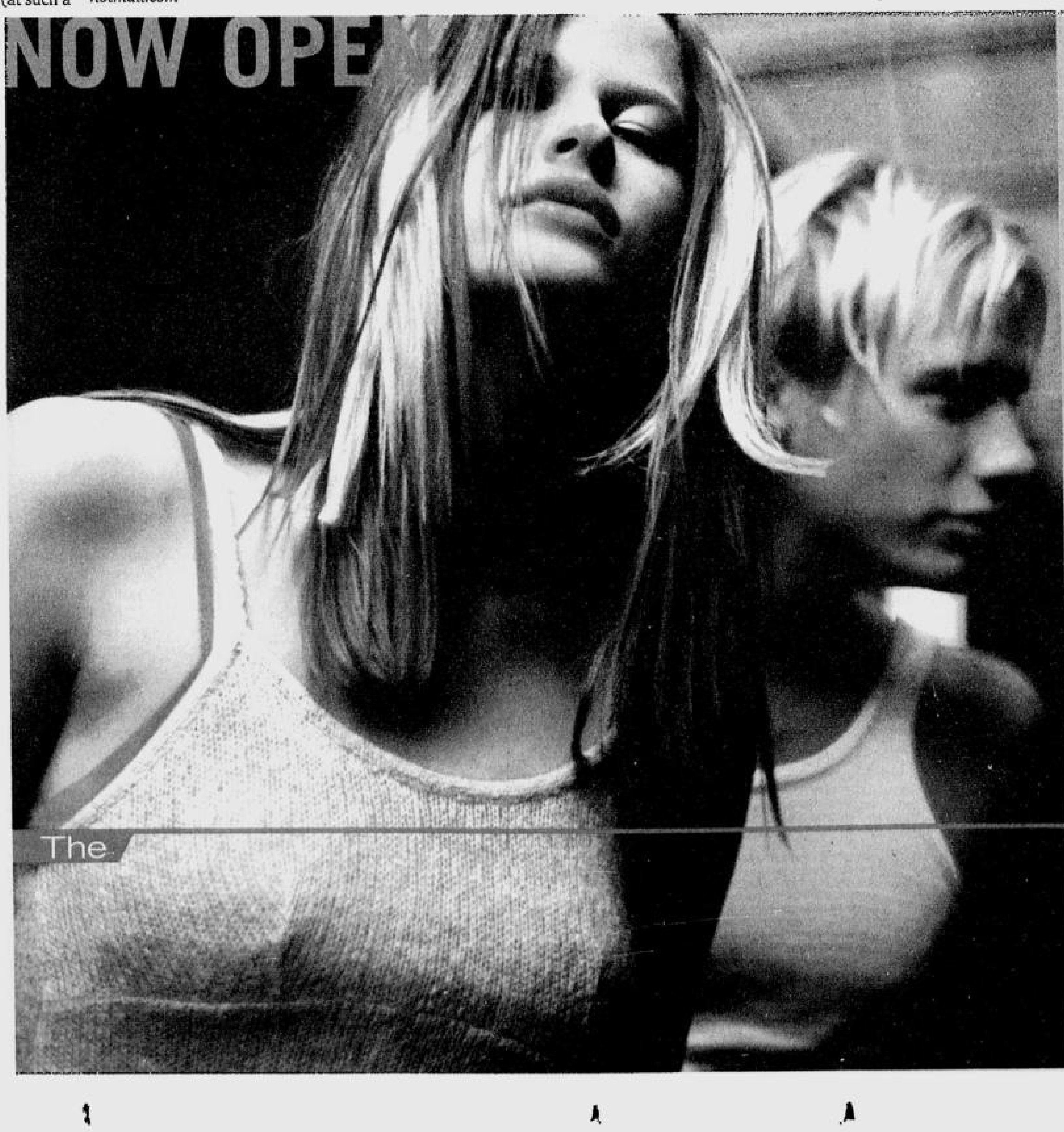

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The high, the low and the psycho

By AC
2bUI correspondent

DEPRESSION is usually misunderstood in this country, and its sister, bipolar disorder, even more so. Instead of introducing it by definition, which can be done on the web, I will define it by example. I will define it through my life.

Hi, I'm AC. I'm a male IT professional based in Metro Manila. Since my college days, I have been a workaholic, a perfectionist obsessed in driving myself better and better, never mind the cost. I started my career by helping build an IT company from almost nothing, to one of the leading firms in its sector. Since I had a messianic complex—I wanted to save the world by being the greatest—I punished myself from 1995 to 1998 with 12 to 16-hour workdays, six to seven days a week. Sleepovers at the office were a common affair.

As I was to realize later, this pushed me further and further to the brink of snapping. While the average person would feel immediately the burnout from this torture, my own brain was frying undetected. This, because I was enjoying it and thought it was getting better and better.

Time to break

The undetected burnout reached its boiling point in February 1998. I was involved in organizing an international IT conference, and I was very excited about it. Many great things were happening, and I felt strongly about them. I did not sleep the whole time we were in that Makati hotel. Being high and excited kept me up.

I was becoming weird, and everyone knew it except me. I was annoying people in the conference, and was shouting out my high-tech ideas for everyone to hear. To update my parents, I called them up and stayed on the phone for three hours. My head was spinning in overdrive and ideas were pouring in uncontrollably.

> My senses were heightened, I felt giddy, I felt like a superior being

ILLUSTRATION: ALBERT RODRIGUEZ

Towards the end of the week, I was hallucinating. A voice was whispering to me, telling me the great things I had to do. Since these were great things, I was not afraid. I became very confident. I met with a cute girl from another country who was exhibiting at the event, and we walked around Glorietta. Let's call her "L." In my altered state, it was love at first sight, though nothing further happened between us that day.

My senses became heightened. This fed into my messianic complex. Later would I find out that these exaggerated senses came about because of the blur between my subconscious and my perceived reality.

Superior me

When the event was over, a co-worker took me home. Others took care of packing up my things. I could not tell my parents how I got home. I was just raving about my experience, talking non-stop. My face was flushed red and burning because of the exertion. I was treating the experience as if I were an incarnation of God, a techie Jesus Christ. I fought with family members because I thought they could not understand me. After three days, I passed out.

When I came to, I was confined in a private room. The room was all bare, there was nothing to see. My mind was burning because it wanted something to chew on—it could not stand seeing nothing. I called the place "Langley," as in "Langley, Virginia," or CIA headquarters, since I believed that I was being held hostage. I believed I had evolved to a higher life form, that my brain had expanded since it had accelerated. Since my sense of touch was amplified, the needle stuck into me for dextrose and medicines was like a knife stabbing my arm. Still, I was raving and uncontrollable. I wanted to walk out of that room. Fortunately, I was tricked into entering the psychiatric ward, or "the basement." Told that my brain was going to be scanned, I cooperated since I wanted to prove that I was now a superior being.

Home is the basement

My entry into the basement was welcomed by its denizens, men and women from teen age to old age, suffering from different psychiatric ailments. My excited mind was slowly being calmed by nerve-numbing drugs. But I was still hyper. While the depressed among us had no trouble sleeping the whole day, my first few days were marked by sleepless nights. To pass the time, my superior self was talking to and "counseling" the other depressed folks. While my delirious self was a sight to fear for some superstitious patients, I still managed to pick up some friends. In my strange dreams, I was thinking of "L" and how life was meant for me in her home country, in the context of my secret life as a superior person with an unbelievable mission.

I spent two weeks in the basement until I was deemed well enough to stay home. Life at home was boring, since I was not allowed to use the computer and the phone. A complication came up—I was allergic to one of the anti-psychotic drugs which was stopping me from going wild.

These drugs numbed by brain, keeping me from thinking creatively. Since I was taken off it, my flip side started coming back. I took a trip to Los Baños with my mom and her cousin, an artist. I was talking about the weirdest things, as if I had ESP and could tell the true reality and the future. Back home, I was thinking of my grand schemes again and was "recruiting" friends to join me. Naturally, this did shape their opinion toward me! I was getting weird again, but I volunteered to return to the basement.

Life is a straitjacket

When I got back, I was getting excitable again. I was drinking water and "baptizing" people by spurting it back on them. I resisted upon being restrained, so I was banished to the isolation room. This was a padded cell whose door could easily be opened by the outside, but not from the inside. Confinement here drove me to think that my secret mission was being affected, so I had to get out. I started to take apart the air conditioner, to use it to pry open the door. To gain attention, I did something... I'd rather not mention it here.

The reaction was that the basement crew had to tie me to the bed in a cloth straitjacket. I lay there, staring at the ceiling and dreaming, with a song playing in my head over and over again. I figured a way out. I would lie down on the side of the bed so that my full weight would rest on the cloth strips, which would eventually tear. I would alternate that with lying on the bed, or flipping over to the other side, to stress the cloth. I never finished that scheme, and had to spend life in there until the doctor figured out what combination of drugs would tone down my psychosis.

I spent the rest of my second two weeks in the basement in a stupor. The mind-numbing drugs made me feel like a zombie, and it would take months until I would be truly myself again.

Normal life

The threat of going psychotic and back to the basement is still there until today, if I don't take care. I voluntarily returned for a week in June 1999, since I had another event that kept me up and hyper for three days. I don't drink much alcohol since it can react with the stuff I take until now, and I don't dare try drugs since who knows what would happen? I did visit "L" in her home country, when I went there for business; needless to say the magic was gone.

Being bipolar means swinging between high and low, and I do get my lows. These are few and far between, though, and are often triggered my incidents of disappointment or frustration. I am "more high" than the average person, and it shows in my being talkative and imaginative. Whenever I feel that my life is ordinary and uninteresting, I remember that the events and experiences I describe here more than make up for it.

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Diary of a stalker

By Pam Pastor

FIRST things first. You are not to try what I did. Any sane individual would tell you that the head-on, upfront approach is a better way to kick off a relationship. Stalking almost always never works. Even if you've been pining for four years, even if your love has been unheeded and you've been rejected, even if you know you guys are meant to be together and she just needs a little push to realize that. Stalking is not the way to go. If you're stubborn and still refuse to listen, you're on your own. Don't blame me if they set the police after you. Or if you are slapped with a restraining order.

Day 1

I typed in his name at Google.com and came up with zilch. I found links leading me to listings of dead celebrities and people who passed board exams. I discovered a mailing list community in Colorado. I realized that he had namesakes in Lisbon and Nebraska. But aside from that, nothing. I used his nickname and then added his mother's maiden name. But still, nothing.

My knowledge of him and how his mind works is limited, based only on what I've heard from friends of friends of his friends. Or his cousin's ex-boyfriend's best friend. You get the drift.

Yup, I don't know him that well. Nor am I truly crazy about him. If I were, I wouldn't make him the subject of an article. See, this piece might ruin whatever chances we could have had. This piece would probably have him running like hell. That doesn't mean, though, that I approached this stalking challenge with less zeal. This may have the men in my life shifting nervously in fear. But I enjoyed my stint as a stalker for the most part anyway. But I'm getting ahead of myself.

After the failure of my first Internet search, my first big break came. My friend "L" called me and said that he was a PExer–meaning he's an active Pinoyexchange.com user. I used the search engine to look his nickname up (Thanks, "L") and after just one click, I got into his brain. The guy had a thing for threads on relationships, friendships, society, sex and music. Interesting. I devoured his words and realized a lot of things – one, we had the same views about life and relationships, and two, we didn't like the same kind of music. I replied to his posts with gusto. Then I created a new PEx alter ego and a new web-based e-mail account and sent him a private message and an e-mail. Then I sat back and waited.

Day 2

Nothing. I felt my heart sinking as I checked PEx and my new e-mail address. There wasn't a single word from him.

I decided to move on to a different medium. I got his number from "D", another friend. I used my spare SIM to text him. It took him an hour to reply. "Hu is dis?" Wow, he even texts like me. "Sum1 undr ur spell," I replied. "Wat spell?" came his message. Hmm, apparently not too bright. I decided to quit before he ruined everything by revealing that he was not worth the trouble.

I called "D" and asked for my victim's address. At first he refused, probably thinking I'd really gone off the deep end. After arguing with him and proving to him that I was still working on logic, he finally relented.

Day 3

That afternoon, I decided to pass by his place. I just wanted to see what it was like. There was a woman in the garden – probably his mom. I thought about going back that night to wait for him to return home. But that could mean sitting there for hours. Maybe I should try another tactic.

By this time I knew "D" was getting annoyed with me. But I just had to call to find out where he hangs out. "Glorietta," D said. "I've seen him there a few times." Apparently, my victim goes there after work. Hmm, maybe I could go to Glorietta tomorrow. He could be there. You never know.

After finding out that M's kuya went to college with him, I went to her house to look at his yearbook. He seemed a bit dweeby in the picture, but he was still cute.

I started texting him again. He didn't seem very responsive. Aside from repeatedly asking who I was, I didn't see any trace of the wit that he brandished around online forums. Or maybe I read the threads with glazed eyes, making myself believe he was grander than he really was. Maybe I had stopped looking at him as a person and more as a conquest.

While I acknowledged these thoughts that kept running in my head, they weren't enough reason for me to stop. I'd go on, even for just a little while longer.

Day 4

I sent him another e-mail. He didn't reply.

I went to Glorietta in hopes of seeing him. I knew it was an unlikely shot but I at least wanted to try. There was no sign of him. I decided to just go and do my own thing.

I received a text message from L. "Ohmygod. Wru? M in gbelt! Jst saw hm in seatles best!"

Before you could say psycho stalker, I was there (okay, that was an exaggeration). And I saw him. He still looked cute, but his image in my mind was cuter. He was hanging out with three other guys, most probably friends from the office. After ordering hot milk, I grabbed a table near theirs. I tried to eavesdrop (bad, I know), but they weren't exactly loud. I texted him because I wanted to see his reaction when he got my message, but he didn't even glance at his phone.

They got up and I followed them. Discreetly, mind you, and from a safe distance. I lost them at the parking lot, though.

To be honest, I was getting tired of the whole stalker deal. What was I getting out of it anyway? Aside from the high probability of giving someone the creeps, nothing. There was no joy in secretly watching someone smile and laugh with his friends because I did not cause that smile, that laughter. There was no excitement in sending the wittiest of text messages to someone who wouldn't even know it came from me. No fun in following a guy around when he could actually enjoy my company.

Frankly, this whole stalker thing was getting to be a drag.

Day 5

Finally! Some amount of success, or so I thought.

He e-mailed me. And when I read it, I gripped the edge of my table so hard that it dug into my palms.

"Who you ba? I refused to answer any more e-mails until your completely honest to me."

Oh my god. The first sentence may be blamed on the text revolution. But the past tense and "your" was just too much.

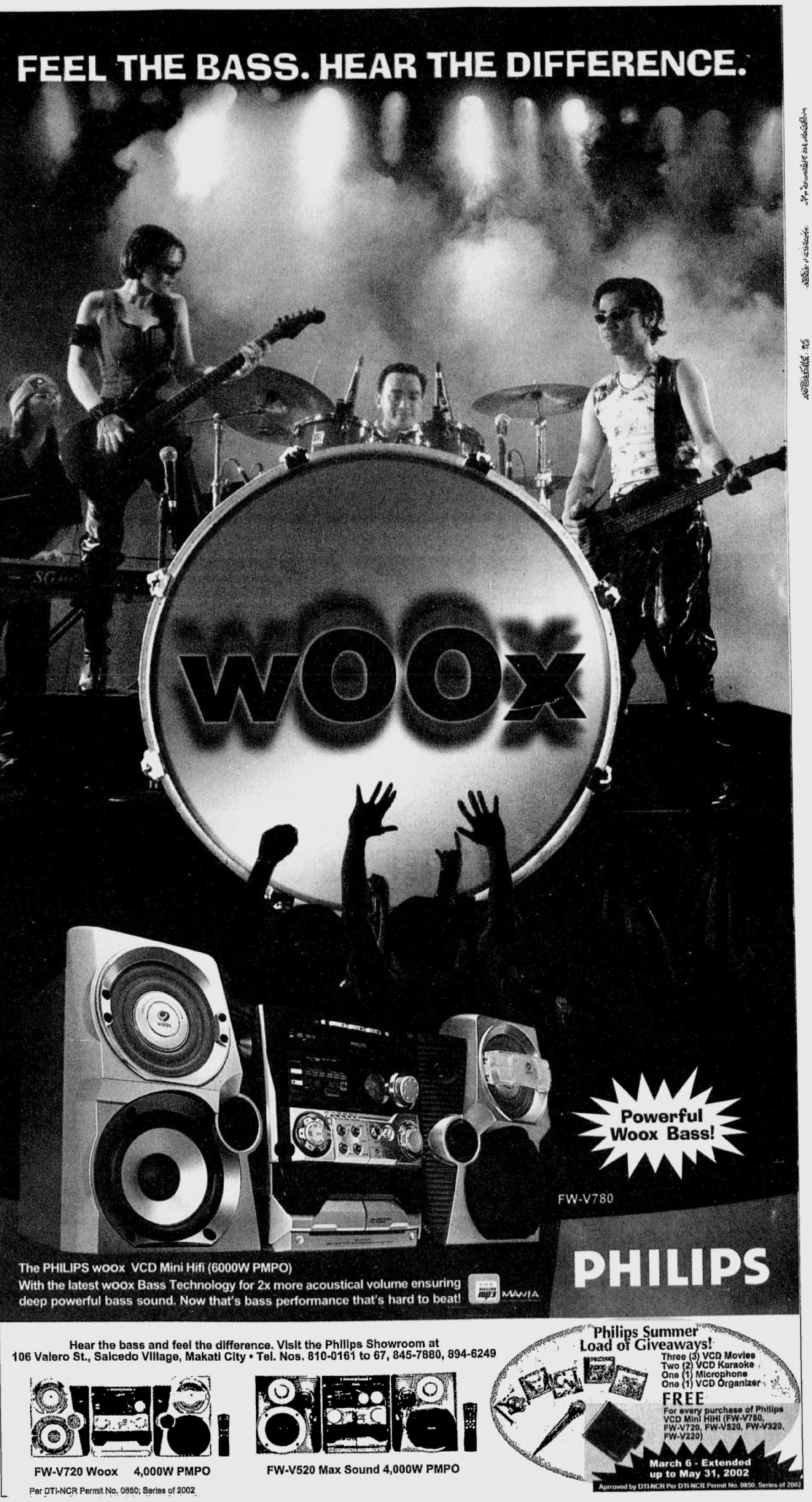
Forget it. I quit.

The past days had been too full of him. Screw stalking. I need to go back to living my own life.

E-mail the author at ppastor@inquirer.com.ph

Ha ha ha ha ha

ILLUSTRATION: ALBERT RODRIGUEZ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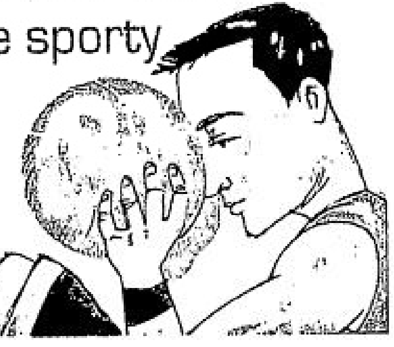

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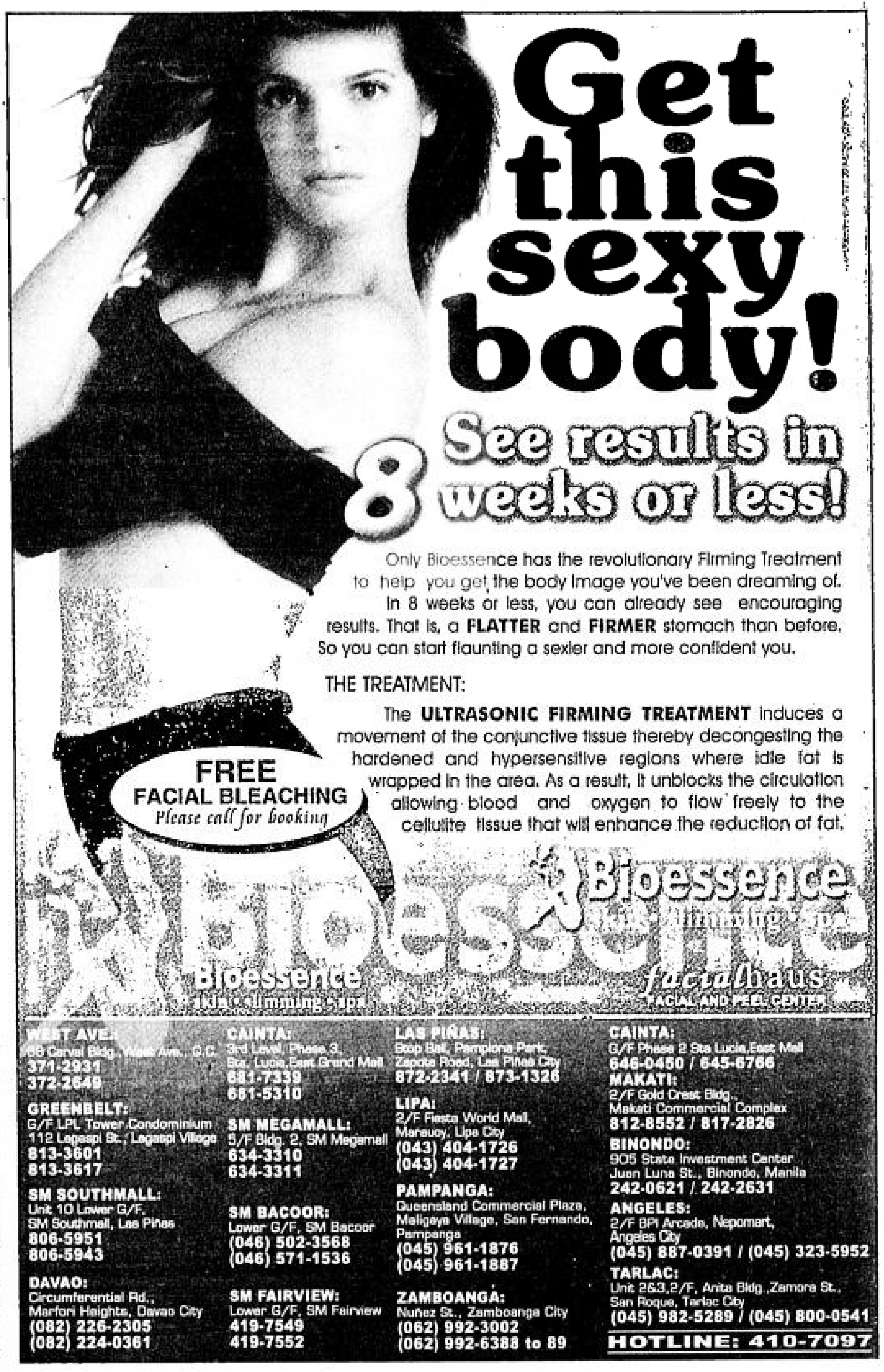

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By Saleema Devi Refran
2bU! Correspondent

COFFEE and six athletic hunky guys one hot morning... how lucky can a girl get? 2bU! had the pleasure to meet up with the two-time UAAP Men's Taekwondo champions, the DLSU Green Jins.

The interview was punctuated throughout with roars of laughter. Team captain/MVP Michael Alejandrino, Erick Olonan and brothers Andre and Jeffrey Ablaza provided most of the jokes/answers while Rookie of the Year Jim Gonzales and Wiko Kabiling merely smiled at their teammates' silliness.

If you were not a taekwondo jin, what would you be?

Jeffrey Ablaza (Jeff): *Siguro* concentrated *ako sa* studies. *Tapos siguro* basketball *naman.*

Jim Gonzales (Jim): *Siguro ako* blues guitarist.

Wiko Kabiling (Wiko): I'd be a geek.

Andre Ablaza (Andre): *Siguro* I'd be playing tennis or swimming. Concentrate *sa* studies and maybe basketball.

Michael Alejandrino (Mic-Mic): *Ako siguro* swimming, studies *saka panonood ng* TV. (Laughs)

Erick Olonan (Erick): Like the others, I'd probably be a swimmer *kasi* it has been my dream to be a swimmer. *Kaso* the water doesn't like me, *eh, kaya sa* land *na lang.* (Laughter)

If you were to become a woman, who would you want to be?

Erick: I want to be someone rich and famous. Julia Roberts.

Mic-Mic: *Ako si* Wonder Woman *para nakakalipad.* (Laughs)

Andre: *Siguro si* Alyssa Milano *kasi* she's very sexy and pretty.

Wiko: I'd want to be my mom.

Jim: *Si* Donita Rose *kasi* she's friendly and always *naka*-smile.

Jeff: *Si, si... sige si* Rica *na lang.* (Laughter)

If girls were coffee, how would you want them?

Andre: If girls were coffee, I'd want them to be hot, creamy and just the way I like it, delicious. (Laughter)

Jim: I think I'd like my coffee to be quite simple *lang.*

Jeff: *Ako* I want espresso. (Laughter)

Mic-Mic: *Gusto ko yung... hindi matapang at madaling inumin.*

Erick: I want coffee that's right for me. Not too hot, not too cold... *sakto lang!* (Laughter)

Wiko: Iced tall mocha. (Smiles)

What would you like to achieve in life?

Mic-Mic: *Syempre gusto ko yung magandang buhay, yung maibibigay ko yung lahat sa* family *ko. Yung maging masaya, walang problema.*

Jim: I want to excel in different fields like cooking, arts, music and other sports.

Jeff: *Magandang bahay, kotse tapos maging* painter.

Erick: After graduating from college, I want to take up my masters *sa* US. I want to extend my hand to the less fortunate people in our country by being a public servant or *isang* appointee *sa* government.

Wiko: I want to do at least three things. One, make at least one person happy. Two, I want to help at least one person reach his/her dreams and, three, save at least one life.

Andre: *Siguro* have a good family, be a good father to my kids and a good provider. Finish my studies and excel in maybe taekwondo and basketball.

What was the sweetest thing you ever did for a girl?

Mic-Mic: *Siguro nung dinalhan ko ng* three dozen roses *yung* girl *sa bahay niya.*

Erick: I'm not the type of guy *na* traditional who gives roses, [so when I] gave roses to my friend when I visited her in the hospital, it was the first time. I found it sweet *kasi* I don't really do that stuff.

Wiko: *Naglagay ako ng* one-page ad *sa isang* school publication for college day.

Jim: I haven't been really sweet to anyone so *siguro wala pa yata.*

Jeff: *Siguro* the sweetest thing I did was *nagbigay ako ng* gift *nung* graduation.

Andre: I'm not really sweet. *Siguro* the sweetest thing I ever did was when I brought flowers and fruits to a girl because she was sick. I'm from QC, she lives in Parañaque.

What are your cheap thrills?

Erick: *Siguro* when a woman smiles at my jokes *kasi* I find myself corny.

Jeff: *Mag*-pinch *ng* butt *ng* friends. (Laughs)

Mic-Mic: *Yung makapagpatawa ng tao.*

Andre: *Siguro* when I sing a song to a girl over the phone.

Wiko: Popping pimples. (Grins)

Jim: Teasing my brother.

Which is harder to heal, a broken heart or a broken ego?

Erick: I think *yung* broken ego because it says a lot about you. If you lose your confidence, even mending a broken heart would be hard to do.

Mic-Mic: Broken ego.

Andre: Broken ego *kasi* broken heart [you need] healing time *lang.* Broken ego *mas masakit.*

Wiko: *Siguro* broken ego *kasi kailangan magpaka-kapal ka.* Broken heart *kailangan mo lang magpakatotoo.*

Jim: *Siguro* broken heart *kasi kapag broken-hearted ka nagsusulk ka, eh.* Affected *yung pagiisip mo.*

Jeff: *Siguro* broken heart *kasi kapag* broken-hearted *ka,* broken ego *ka.* (Laughter)

What's your take on aggressive girls?

Erick: They turn me off.

Mic-Mic: *Nakaka*-turn off *din kasi parang hindi Pilipina.*

Andre: For me, it's okay as long as they know their limitations.

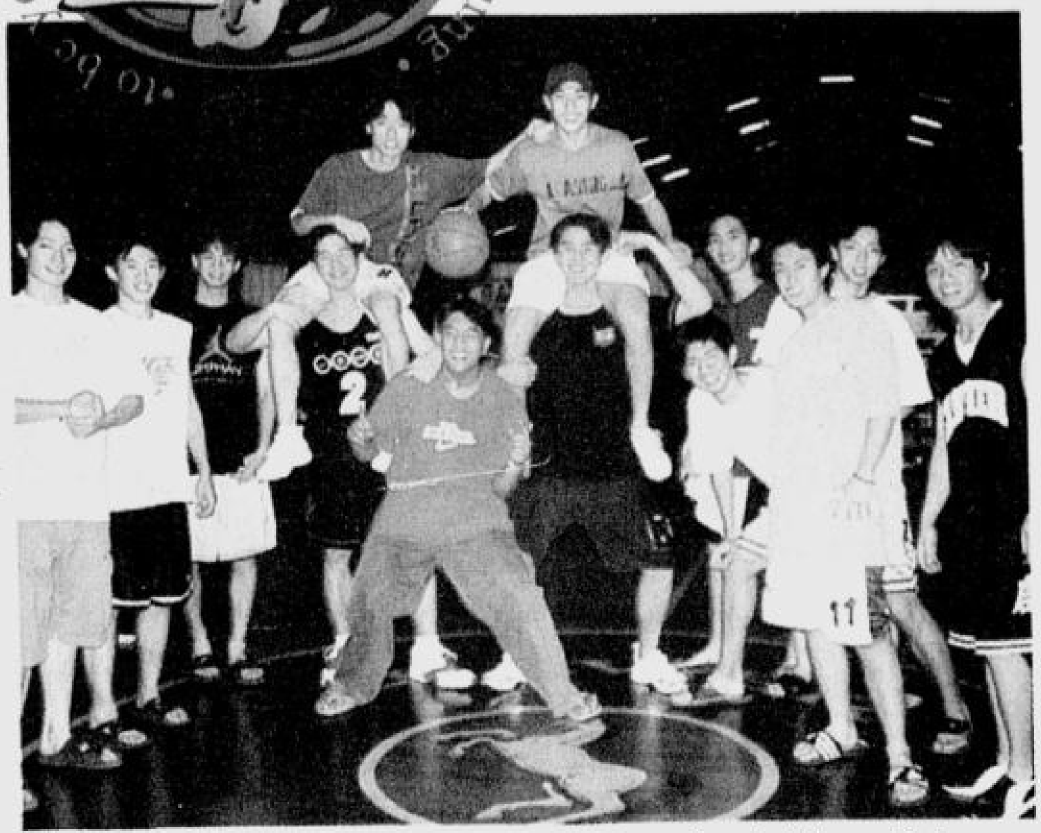
Wiko: *Ilang* thousands of years *nang hinahabol ng mga* guys *yung mga babae. Kaya kami naman!* (Grins)

Jim: Turn off *kasi sa akin ang mga* aggressive girls.

Jeff: *Depende sa pagiging* aggressive *nung babae. Siguro basta nasa lugar* okay *lang.*

Still haven't had enough? To know more about these guys...

E-mail the author at s_a_l_e_e_m_a@yahoo.com



BON, Lloyd, Chris, Sam, Dudang, Eric, Joe, Ty, JC, Marty, Francis, Julius and Luke

A brotherhood forged in a basketball court

By Tammy David and Cheryl Tiu
2bU! Correspondents

IN PINOYEXCHANGE.COM'S UAAP forum, a topic that dominates the threads, aside from the never-ending La Salle-Ateneo wars and player information, is high school basketball players. Particularly the Xavier boys.

What's up with these boys? Like anyone their age, they enjoy eating, sleeping, watching movies, going to the beach and playing golf at Tagaytay Highlands. But they're not exactly your ordinary team. They have won the Milo Passerelle-NCR (1999), Milo Passerelle National Finals (2000), MMBL Division 4 (2000), Paya Aspirants (2000), Paya Juniors (2000), Milo Passerelle-NCR (2000), MMBL Division 2 (2001), Tiong Lian Juniors (2001), Issa, Paya Aspirants (2001), Paraprisa San Juan (2001), Paraprisa Pasig (2001), PAYA Juniors (2001), JAM (2001), MMBL Division 1 (2002), Tiong Lian (2002)—whew!—all under coach Alfredo Amador.

Like most teams, Bon Kimber Syiaco, Eric Yee, JC Yu, Lloyd Dy, Francis Ang, Joseph Chua, Tyrone Tang, Chris Tiu, Marty Tio, Sam Young, Julius Hon, Leonard "Dudang" Lee, Luke Orbos, Paul Chua and Randy Chua have gone beyond being teammates to become brothers. Five members of the team, seniors, are moving on—Young to Canada, Lee to Mapua, Joe Chua and Yee to Ateneo, and Tang to La Salle. The rest will stay for another year.

2bU! got to hang out and talk to the boys (without Randy and Paul Chua) at the Xavier School gym, after a summer practice, discussing their most memorable games, most embarrassing experiences, how they deal with discrimination and their future plans.

What were some of your most memorable games?

Joe: Tiong Lian this year. It was our last year in Xavier so it was our last chance to show the whole community how good the school was. It was like a parting game for the league [as well]; we're really going to miss the guys here.

Eric: The Passerelle Championship [against San Beda]; it was the first league we won in high school.

Francis: MMBL, the semifinals against Letran. We were down by around 15 in the first quarter but we still won by 11. They were huge (Letran players)—they had three or four 6-footers who could really play, including one who was 6'7", and we beat them.

Embarrassing scenes on court?

JC: When Marty stopped the game! (Laughter) He hit one of the opposing players on the face with his elbow and they had to stop the game because the other team wouldn't play with us anymore.

How often do you, guys, practice?

Chris: It depends. If it's a big league, like Tiong Lian, almost every day. But if it's a smaller league like Paya, MWF. [During the] summer, every day.

Any exciting stories abroad?

Francis: In Taiwan, fast break *na yung* opponent, *hinabol ni* Chris. *Eh nag*-fake *yung* opponent, *medyo sahod.* The other team didn't appreciate it especially the referee. He ran toward Chris, and pushed and kneed him.

Chris: After that, they stopped the game *na rin kasi nagka*-rumble-rumble *na.*

***Anong* stage *na yung* relationship *niyo*: teammates or brothers?**

All: Brothers!

What if you guys parted ways, *yung iba* La Salle, *iba* Ateneo, you think *magbati-bati pa rin kayo?*

All: *Oo naman!*

Who are some of the basketball players you admire?

All: Chris!

I mean, professional basketball players?

All: Chris!

Do you make friends with the other teams when you have games?

Chris: Yeah, usually *mga* Ateneans because usually in games like JAM, there are interactions so we get to meet them *rin.*

***Sino yung* chick boy *dito*?**

All: Marty!

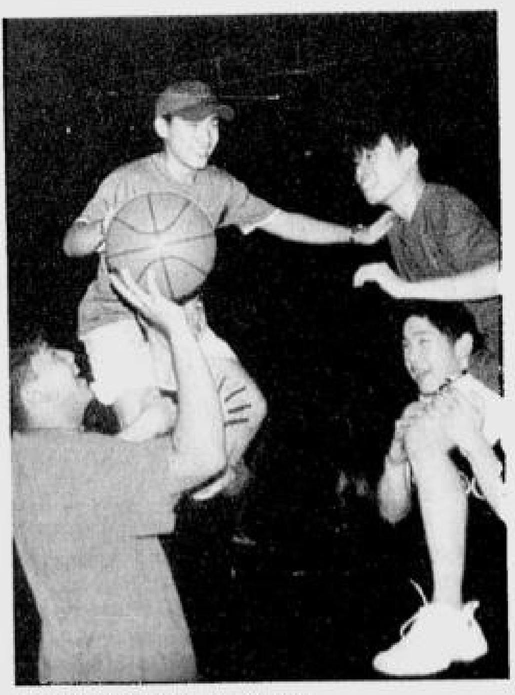
So what's it like training with Cordona, Mike Cortez? Were you shy with them or "Hell, *ako si* Tyrone Tang!" (Laughter)

Ty: At first *parang sobrang* shy, *kasi syempre* loner *ka doon, eh, ikaw lang mag-isa taga*-Xavier. *Tapos lahat sila, aasarin ka*: "O, Hapon!" *Kasi* they call Joseph Yeo [that]. "O Hapon! *Kapatid mo, Hapon!*" After a while, okay *na. Parang wala na,* you're welcome *na,* normal *na.*

Since you're already in the UAAP, why do you think there's a resurgence of Xavier boys? Why are Xavier boys hot right now?

Ty: For me *siguro, lahat ng* training, *lahat ng* motivation *galing talaga kay* Coach Amador. *Siya yung* inspiration, *siya yung nag*-build *sa amin* as winners. *Sà kanya galing lahat yan.* Without him, *siguradong yong* 15 championships *wala yon. Kasi sa kanya nag*-start *yung* program *ng* basketball *sa* high school. He's the

BROTHERHOOD/ p.E3



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Brotherhood

From page E2

best.

When you guys get discouraged, what motivates you to go on?

Eric: Parents. They supported us from the start.

Sam: Coach!

Sam, how does it feel that you've been in basketball all your life then all of a sudden you're leaving for Canada?

Sam: It wasn't my choice. The team's a big part of my life. *Syempre ayaw ko iwanan yung* memories. If I go to another country, there will be [new] friends but there won't be friends like them. This team is very open—we get to talk and comfort each other when we have problems.

***Sino yung hindi* open?**

All: Dudang!

***Sino yung parang nanay/kuya sa* team?**

All: Sammy!

***Ano yung pinaka-grabeng ginawa sa inyo ng* fans *niyo*?**

Sam: *Sino kaya yung hinalikan sa* Taiwan *dito?*

Chris: *Sino kaya yung binigyan ng* condom *dito?* (Laughter)

How do you guys deal with the discrimination, like "*Instik kayo*"?

Marty: Don't mind them *lang para iwas away. Parang wala kang naririnig.*

Joe: Just prove that you're worthy of yourself.

E-mail the authors at bluntman_silentbob@yahoo.com (Tammy) and chloe_dominique@yahoo.com (Cher)

Getting

From page E4

from any medication, especially if it's not prescribed by your gym instructor or doctor.

Sweat or strain. When you finally get to start with your fitness program, you'll learn that gym exercises are classified into two types. Aerobic exercises work on your respiratory and cardiovascular systems (heart and lung power). With these exercises you sweat a lot, your heart pumps wilder than ever, and you have to catch your breath once in a while. You have to warm up and cool down with these exercises. If you want to take it easy and just sweat for the day, stick with this form of exercise.

Muscle-toning exercises are those you do with the aid of gym equipment. These exercises contract your muscles and tone them. For gals, it's best to take advantage of the Aerogym program, which includes tae-bo, bench and hi-lo aeros. For guys, the gym alone will help you gain weight and beef up. But if you also want to increase your agility, combine your workout with kickboxing. Working out makes your body reach its full, healthy potential.

E-mail the author at michikookoo@edsamail.com.ph

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Getting the best out of fitness programs

By Michelle C. Pino
2bU! Correspondent

IF you have tried and failed to endure every sport invented on ground, high up in the air and even under water, then it's about time to seek an alternative to sweat out all the accumulated fats. Gone are the days when going to the gym is a luxury. Keeping fit and healthy is not only for the well-off and well-known; even those belonging to the middle class are concerned about weight loss and weight gain.

It's always easy to love any sport. But for some reasons and unavoidable circumstances, some of us have to deal with the fact that sports is not our lifestyle (ouch!). Still, we need to sweat out regularly to keep fit and stay healthy. But there are guidelines we need to know to get the best out of fitness services and programs.

Picky but practical. Remember that you have to be in the gym regularly. Thus, a visit to your fitness center will have to be a part of your lifestyle. Since you don't want to develop a habit of arguing with the lazy part of yourself, choose a fitness center that will boost your enthusiasm to attend sessions. Filipinos are starting to learn the value of health that's why a number of gyms or fitness centers are growing like mushrooms around the metropolis.

Take time to survey the place and its amenities. Most centers are not only for gym extremes. Some have services like aerobics classes, self-defense sessions (kickboxing is a must) and body pampering like massage and saunas (with physical therapy and herbal treatments). Decide on the ideal package for you. Make sure that you get the best out of it despite your rigid schedule and limited budget. Registration fees can range from P500-1,250 and enrollment monthly fees are from P1,500-2,500.

Doc check. You should check with your doctor before you begin on any fitness program. Let the experts tell you what exercises you should work on and what nutritional diet should go with it. Since our physical makeups are different, so are our exercising needs. Know what your body needs and work around it. Just in case good old doc forgets, your heart and its performance should be top priorities in your checkup. You don't want it giving up on you while you're on the treadmill. But it's best if your fitness center has a trainer with a medical background in the gym.

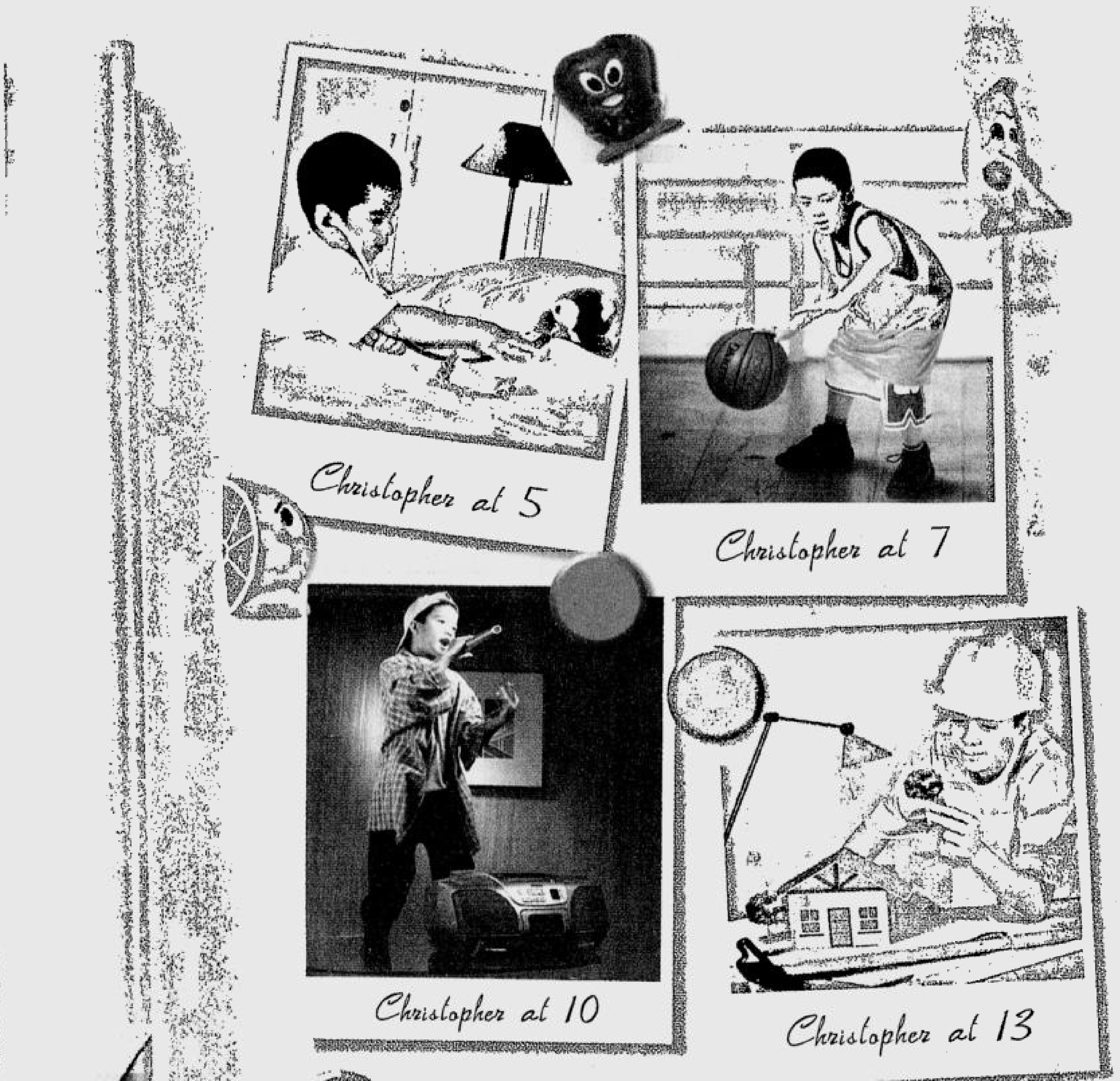
Never ever. Stick with your gym's house rules and policies. It's for your own good. The first rule you should never forget: Don't take a bath after a workout. Though the *pasma* myth is a health fallacy, taking a bath after a body workout will kill your muscles and drain out your energy. Your muscles work hard as you go from one equipment to another and then you soak yourself in cold or warm water... aaargh! Don't ever think about it. You can take a really quick shower though or a long, satisfying bath before you go to the gym.

Second, never argue about the number of repetitions and kinds of exercises in your program with your instructor. These guys and gals are paid to trim you down or beef you up. Not unless you listen to their instructions and follow them without cheating, you'll never get satisfying results.

Third rule you have to remember: Do not drink too much water in one intake. True, you should drink 8-10 glasses of water a day, but not in succession! Drink enough water to avoid drying up your throat. Experts say that drinking too much water in one intake (especially when done regularly) will eventually cause harm to your hardworking body. A bottle or two of energy drinks will do.

Lastly, you should never take painkillers or even paracetamol when your muscles begin to ache. The pain is natural when you're working out in a gym, especially if it's your first time. Remember, no pain, no glory. So stay away

GETTING/ p.E3



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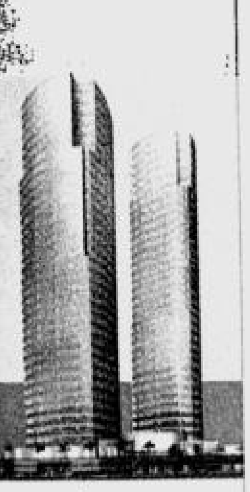

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Sports films use romance to draw audiences

By Niño Mark M. Sablan
2bU! Correspondent

DIFFERENT sports have made it to the movies. Often though, the films focus on love and relationships. It makes the movie and its characters more interesting, though, distinguishing it from the usual fare you see on television broadcasts of sports events.

Here are some sporty movies spiced with just the right amount of romance.

'The Cutting Edge'

In "The Cutting Edge," Moira Kelly as Kate and D. B. Sweeney as Doug are opposites who have to join forces to get a crack at the Olympic gold. Kate is a bratty doubles figure skater without a partner while Doug is an ice hockey has-been because of an injury. Filled with MTV-style clips of ice action but with lots of onscreen chemistry, this contemporary classic is a sure treat for any romantic, sports lover or not.

What to watch out for: The couple's "secret weapon" practice. Or when delicious Sweeney goes topless. Drool.

Flaw: Since Kelly and Sweeney are not exactly ice skating experts, the movie tries to deceive us with creative, lightning-fast editing to make us believe the stars are doing their own stunts. Hello, eight-zero.

Reminiscent of: Robbie Williams' "She's The One" vid.

Most romantic scene: Doug's confession toward the end of the movie. Kate's reaction is simply jaw-dropping and makes one feel like applauding.

'Bring It On'

As every teener knows by now, this is about the Toro cheering squad led by the newly elected team captain Torrance (Kirsten Dunst). Best known for their spunky moves and killer routines, the Rancho Carne High School official team rooters are aiming for their sixth national championship trophy. But the trophy seems suddenly out of reach when they discover that their supposedly original routines were actually stolen from the funky Clovers by the Toro's old captain. Laced with love angles and filled with flips, tumbles and lots of hurling, "Bring It On" brings home the bacon for every teenager.

What to watch out for: A very graphic puke scene sure to induce hahaha and yuck.

Flaw: The tryouts. Same formula, same pattern. It's like every other tryout scene you've seen.

Reminiscent of: I hate to point this out but, in the spirit of honesty, that great-looking love interest of Torrance strangely looks like L.A. Lopez.

Most romantic scene: The toothbrush scene is strangely sexy. I wanted to brush my teeth with them.

'For Love of the Game'

A love story masquerading as a sport story, this one stars Kevin Costner as a pitcher, who suddenly takes a break from fame and glory, then makes a comeback. Full of flashbacks, the film tells the love story between this popular baseball figure and a writer he swept off her feet. They separate as they seem to be too different.

What to watch out for: Every time Kelly Preston (Costner's leading lady) appears onscreen. She's such a horrible actress it's fun to watch her.

Flaw: Kelly Preston.

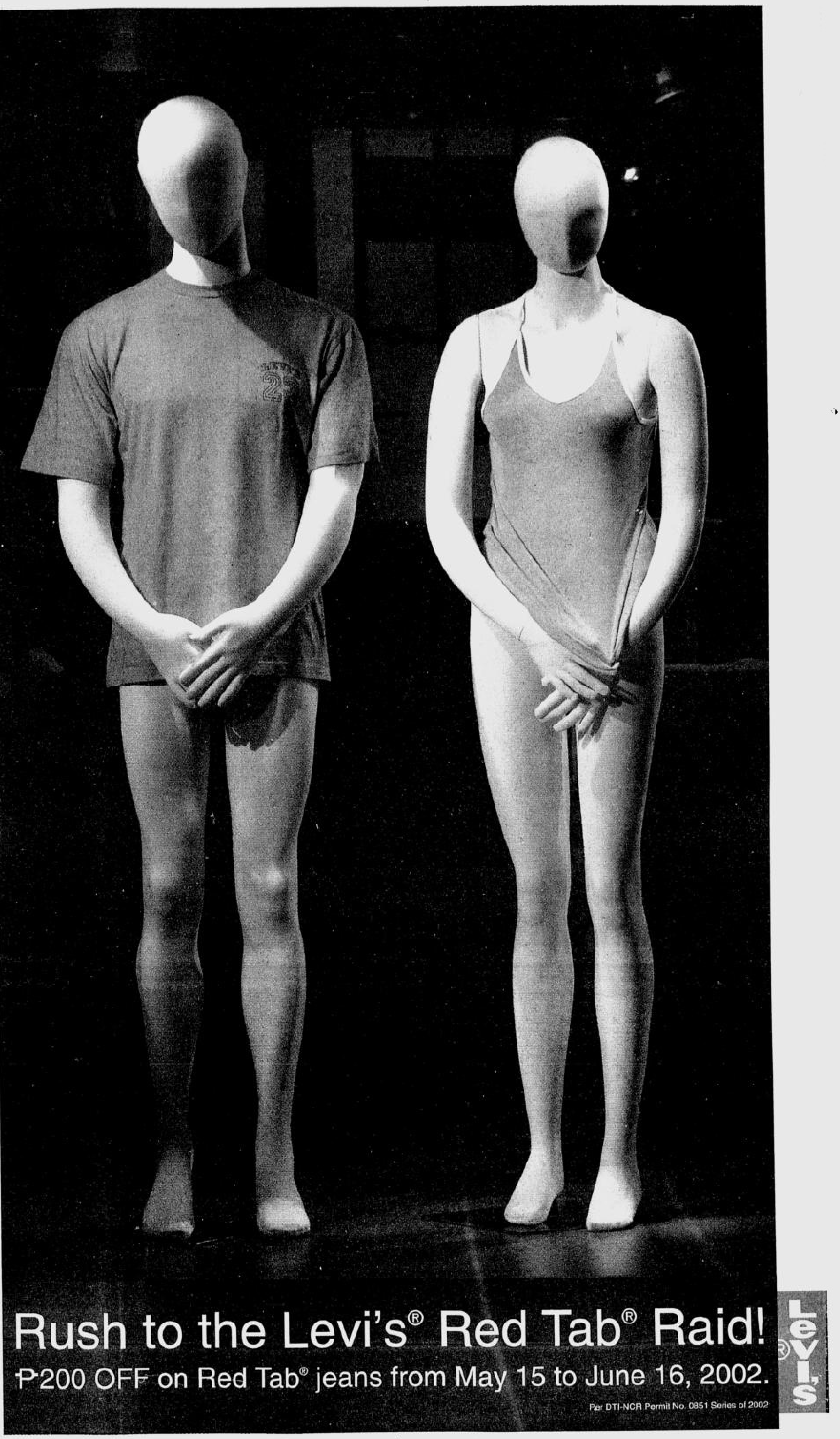
Reminiscent of: Nothing in particular. Actually, it's something you wouldn't even remember after an hour or so. Truly forgettable.

Most romantic scene: The movie's end is predictable but it still makes you want to put your hand on your heart and sigh.

'Ali'

It is the life story of champion boxer Cassius Clay, who changed his name and became better known as the great Muhammad Ali. All his life, Ali didn't fight just for championship titles. More importantly, he stood up and fought for his religion and beliefs. He fought

SPORTS/ p.E6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Sports films . . .

From page E5

with the government, gained respect from people of different nations and colors. He overcame adversities by relying on himself and on his faith.

What to watch out for: The love scenes with different women are waker-uppers since "Ali" is extremely boring.

Flaw: The movie begins with a long, confusing 10-minute music video followed by a long, boring 10-minute boxing match.

Reminiscent of: Definitely not "Men in Black," which is loads watchable than "Ali."

Most romantic scene: There were some sex scenes but they did not look romantic or sexy.

'The Replacements'

In this Keanu Reeves-starrer, an old football coach agrees to handle the Sentinels only if he could have full control in choosing the lineup. The coach replaces the players with nonpros like a preacher, a convict, a runner who can't catch, a European kicker and a SWAT team officer. The Sentinels bounce back and achieve football fame. However, some jealous people try to rock the boat.

What to watch out for: The cheerleader tryouts, though predictable, are hilariously entertaining.

Flaw: The whole idea of replacing real players with incompetent fellows is pretty dumb but if they didn't have that as a premise, then there wouldn't have been a movie.

Reminiscent of: The cheerleader tryouts resemble any other audition scene in teen school flick that are supposed to be funny.

Most romantic scene: When Reeves gets his body smothered in some Katinko or Vicks by his love interest (a girl from "Melrose Place").

'Rollerball'

It is 2005 and rollerball, a combination of roller derby and basketball, is the hottest sport in the planet packing arenas with viewers from all over the world. Chris Klein, LL Cool J and Rebecca Romijn-Stamos are members of team USA. Rollerball is a dangerous game, made even riskier by a team owner who'd do anything to boost already high ratings. Feeling heroic, the stars try to expose the corruption and treachery secretly going on—a very risky play where the penalty could be deadly.

What to watch out for: Pink cameos. Not that they're truly amazing. It's just fun to go, "*Ay, si* Pink! *Ay, si* Pink!"

Flaw: There is one lengthy chase scene at night and everything is just green and black. Visually boring and unpleasant.

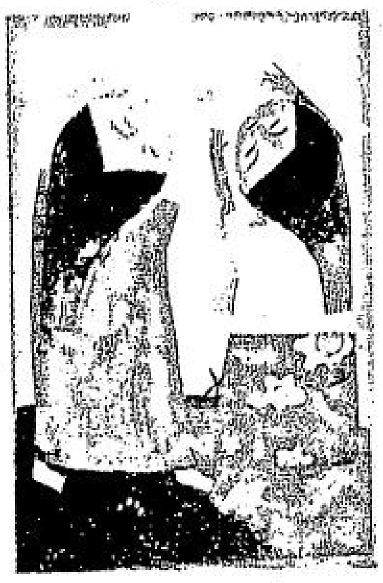
Reminiscent of: The first thing that came to mind was "Rollerboys."

Most romantic scene: When Aurora (Romijn-Stamos) enters the arena to warn Jonathan (Klein) of impending danger.

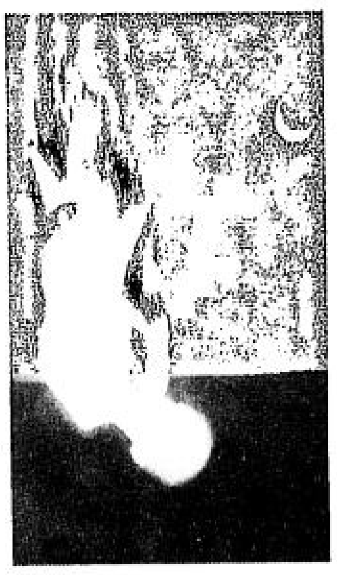
Other sporty movies you might want to check out: "The Waterboy," "Space Jam," "Blue Chips," "The Legend of Bagger Vance," "The Air Up There," "A League of Their Own," "Jerry Maguire," "Major League," "Ice Castles," "The Sixth Man," "Girlfight," "Bakit Di Totohanin."

E-mail the author at katotino@yahoo.com

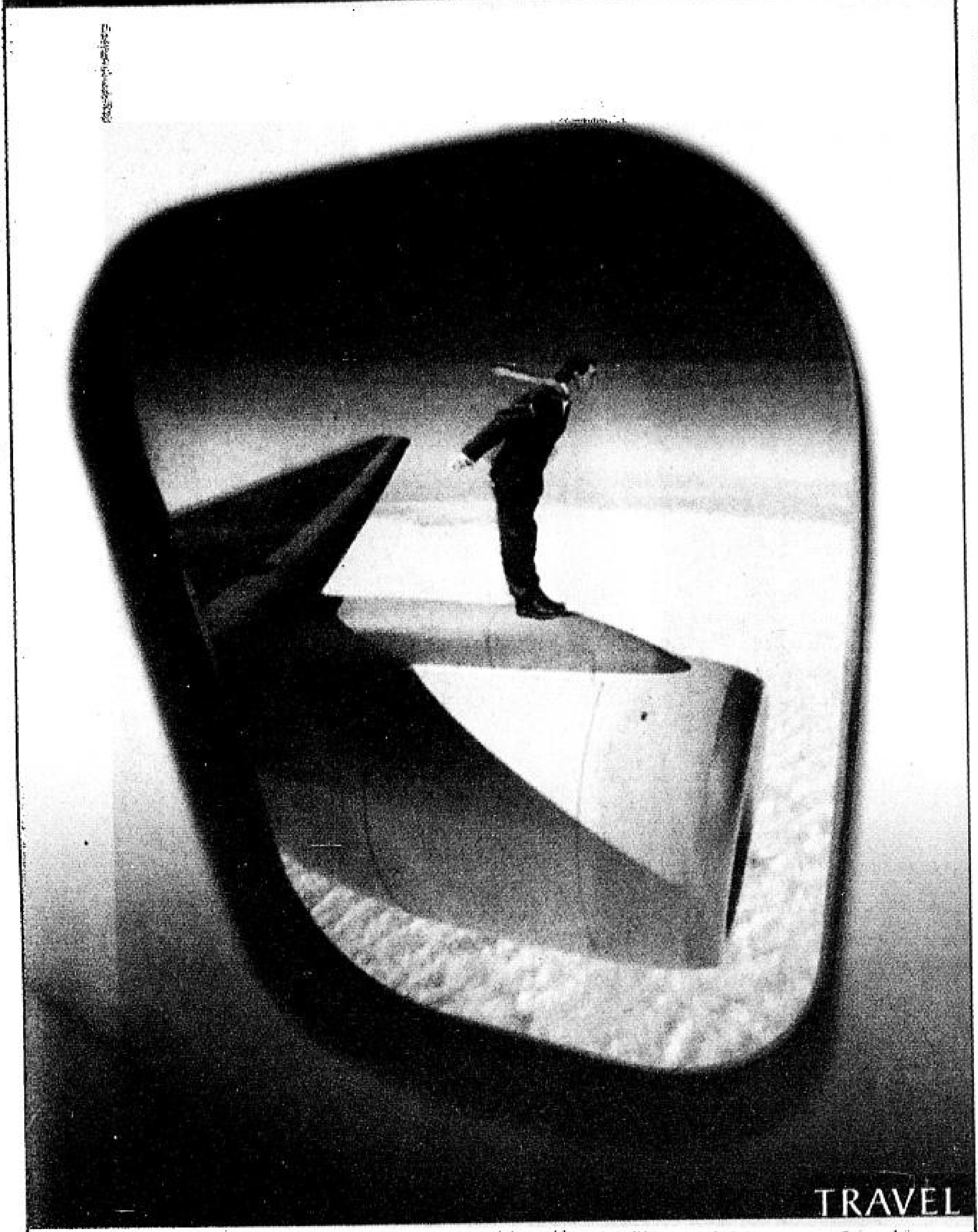
Young artists at Red Dot resto-gallery



AWARD-WINNING young artists Romeo R. Forbes Jr. and Roldan C. Ventura join forces in "Mutual Individuality," which opens on May 18 at the Red Dot Gallery and Restaurant, 100 Perea St., Legaspi Village, Makati City. The show ends June 7. Call 816-2877.



If your body can't go on a vacation, let your mind take the trip.



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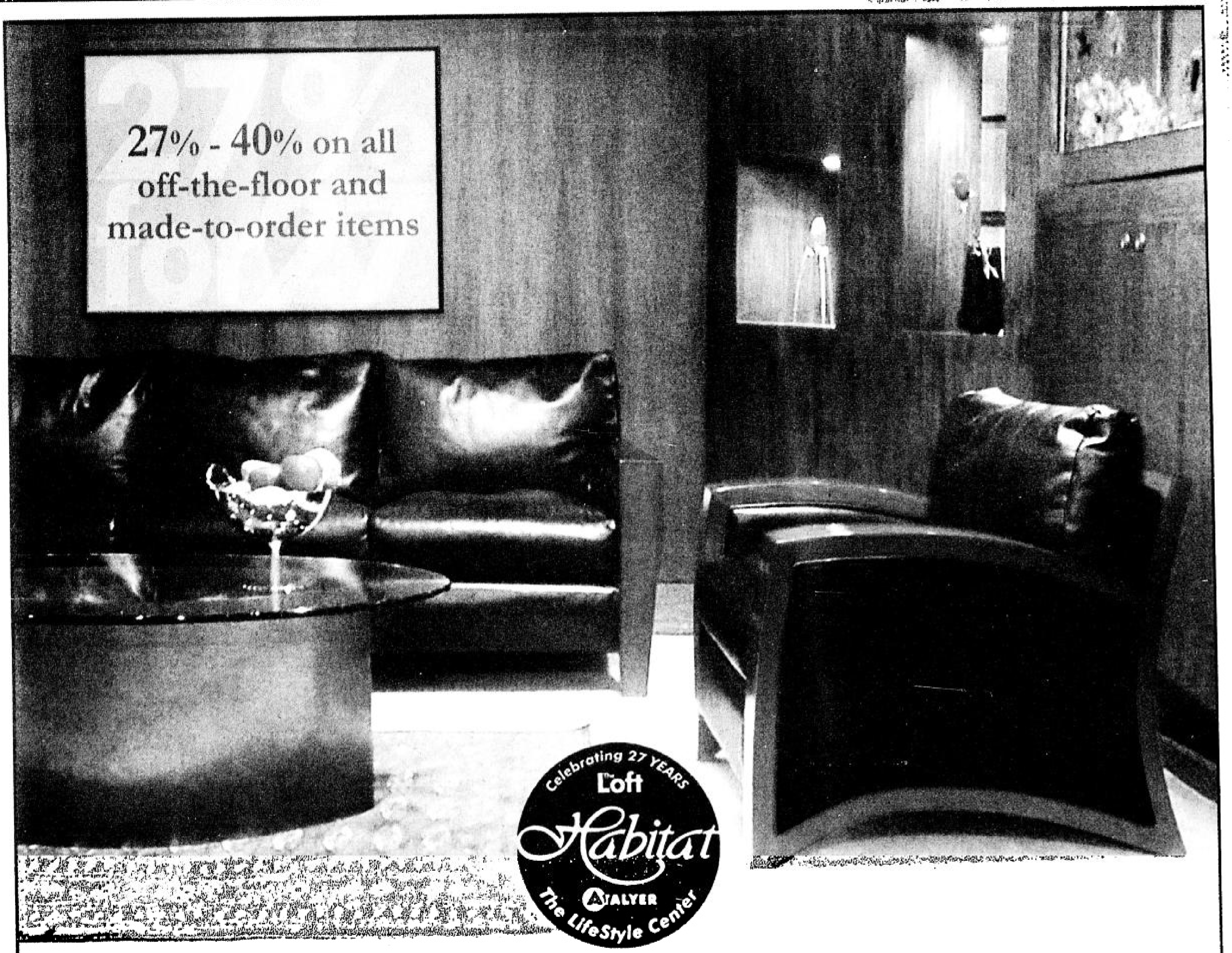

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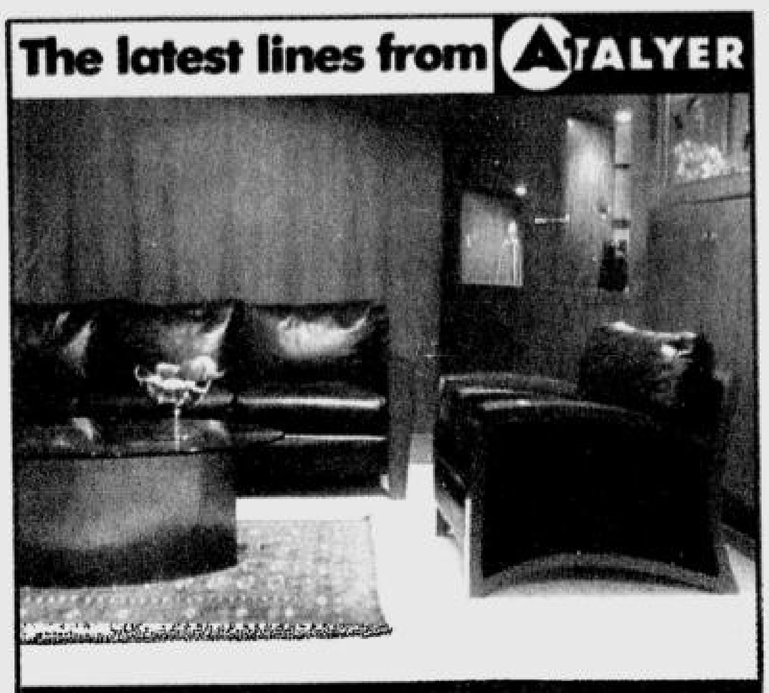

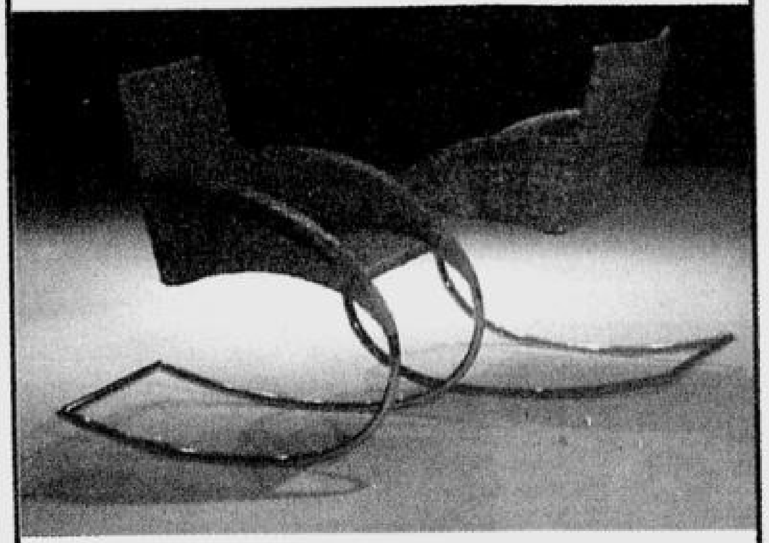

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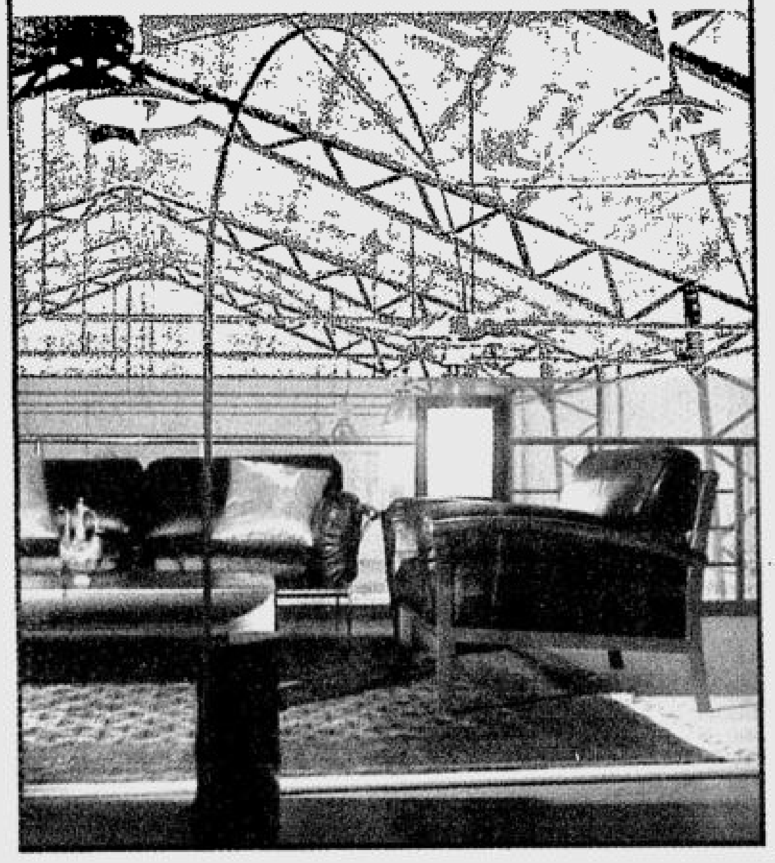

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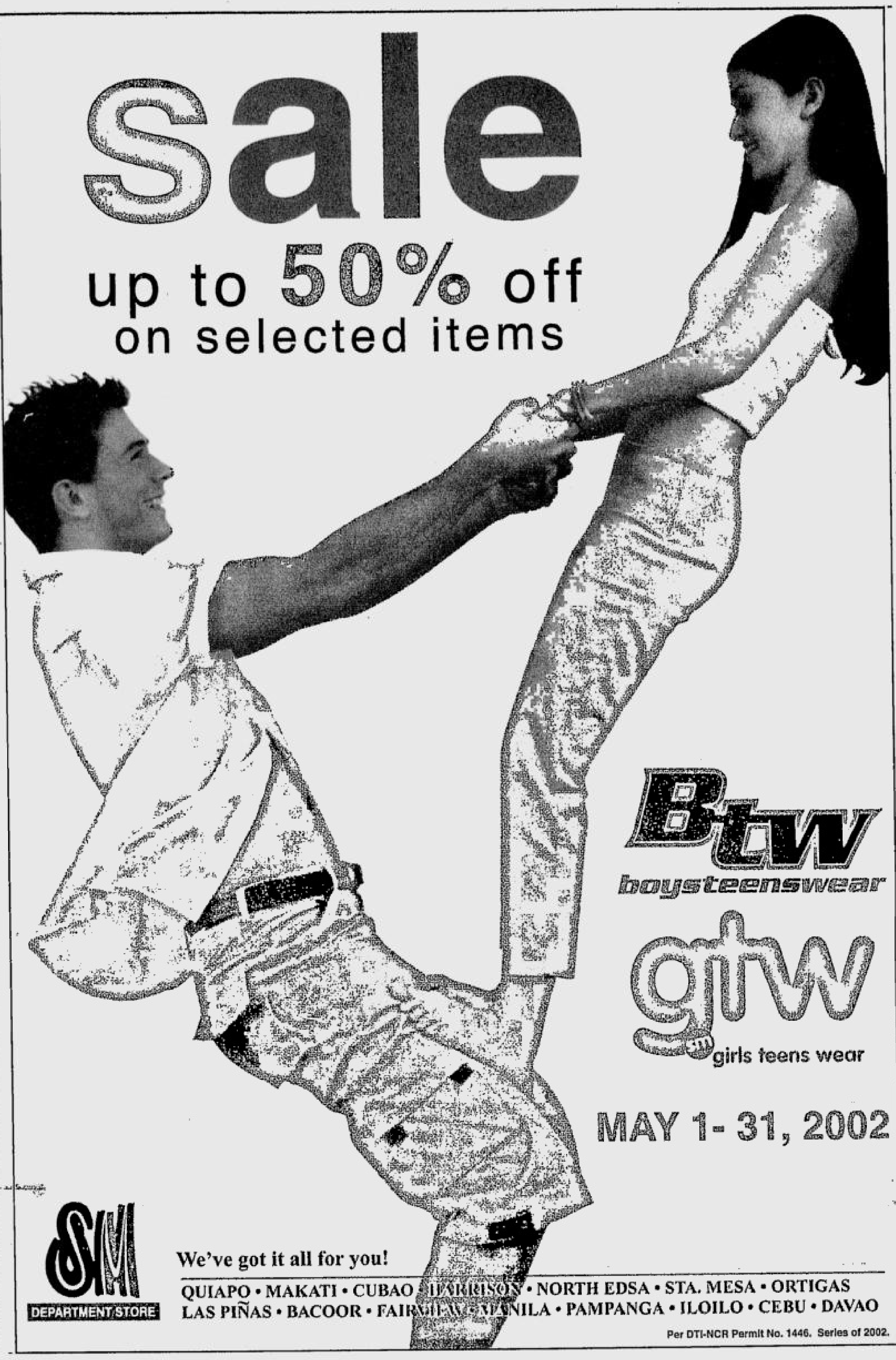

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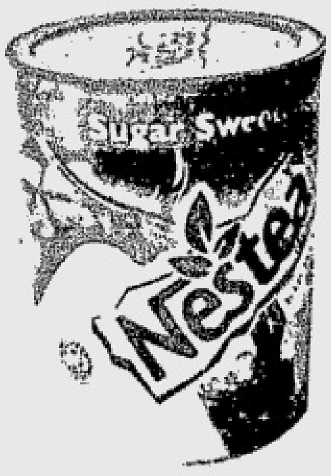

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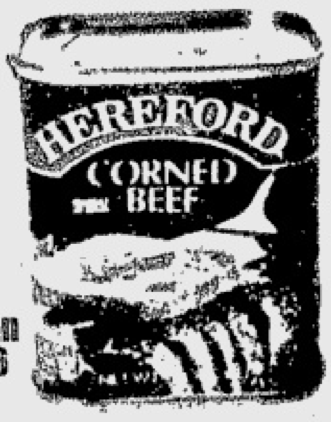

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The 'STAR WARS' empire strikes again

By Ruel S. De Vera

THERE'S still nothing like it in all of moviedom. Once that powerfully familiar progression of John William's "Star Wars Main Title" swells and the words start scrolling up the screen, moviegoers get a taste of the scope and the grandeur of the "Star Wars" epic. And now, seemingly as compensation after sitting through the culturally significant but otherwise dopey "Episode I: The Phantom Menace," "Star Wars" fanatics and regular movie-going folk finally have a motion picture that truly lives up to the "Star Wars" legacy.

After all the expectation and the advance hype, how could "Episode II: Attack of the Clones" ever live up to its billing? The answer is simple enough: by doing what the "Star Wars" trilogy did best, crafting an intricate but thrilling ride into the stars. Using the rather stiff, expository "Phantom Menace" as a jump-off point to introduce characters and settings, director and "Star Wars" guru George Lucas tells his story confidently and effectively with this more substantial, more entertaining movie.

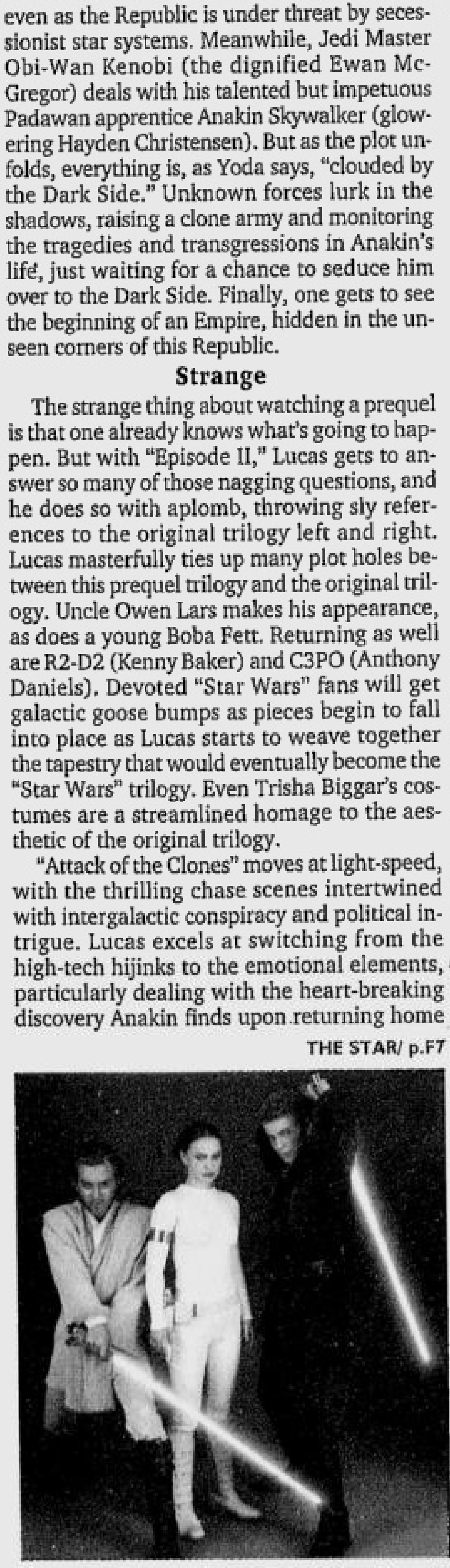
Set 10 years after "Phantom Menace," "Attack of the Clones" begins with a mysterious assassin out to kill Naboo's ex-queen and now senator Padme Amidala (the startingly beautiful Natalie Portman). The Jedi are called in, even as the Republic is under threat by secessionist star systems. Meanwhile, Jedi Master Obi-Wan Kenobi (the dignified Ewan McGregor) deals with his talented but impetuous Padawan apprentice Anakin Skywalker (glowering Hayden Christensen). But as the plot unfolds, everything is, as Yoda says, "clouded by the Dark Side." Unknown forces lurk in the shadows, raising a clone army and monitoring the tragedies and transgressions in Anakin's life, just waiting for a chance to seduce him over to the Dark Side. Finally, one gets to see the beginning of an Empire, hidden in the unseen corners of this Republic.

Strange

The strange thing about watching a prequel is that one already knows what's going to happen. But with "Episode II," Lucas gets to answer so many of those nagging questions, and he does so with aplomb, throwing sly references to the original trilogy left and right. Lucas masterfully ties up many plot holes between this prequel trilogy and the original trilogy. Uncle Owen Lars makes his appearance, as does a young Boba Fett. Returning as well are R2-D2 (Kenny Baker) and C3PO (Anthony Daniels). Devoted "Star Wars" fans will get galactic goose bumps as pieces begin to fall into place as Lucas starts to weave together the tapestry that would eventually become the "Star Wars" trilogy. Even Trisha Biggar's costumes are a streamlined homage to the aesthetic of the original trilogy.

"Attack of the Clones" moves at light-speed, with the thrilling chase scenes intertwined with intergalactic conspiracy and political intrigue. Lucas excels at switching from the high-tech hijinks to the emotional elements, particularly dealing with the heart-breaking discovery Anakin finds upon returning home

THE STAR/ p.F7



FAR from the Dark Side. Obi-Wan Kenobi (Ewan McGregor) with Senator Padme Amidala (Natalie Portman) and Anakin Skywalker (Hayden Christensen)

> After the disappointing 'Phantom Menace,' George Lucas reignites his light saber with the thrilling 'Attack of the Clones,' a movie truly worthy of the 'Star Wars' pedigree

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In America, schools have accepted this responsibility of educating and training the next generation of entrepreneurs. From fewer than 25 business schools with courses in entrepreneurship in the early 1990s, there were more than 125 schools with full-blown majors in entrepreneurship at the close of the decade. In the Philippines, Thames Business School will be one of the pioneers in teaching entrepreneurship on a college level.

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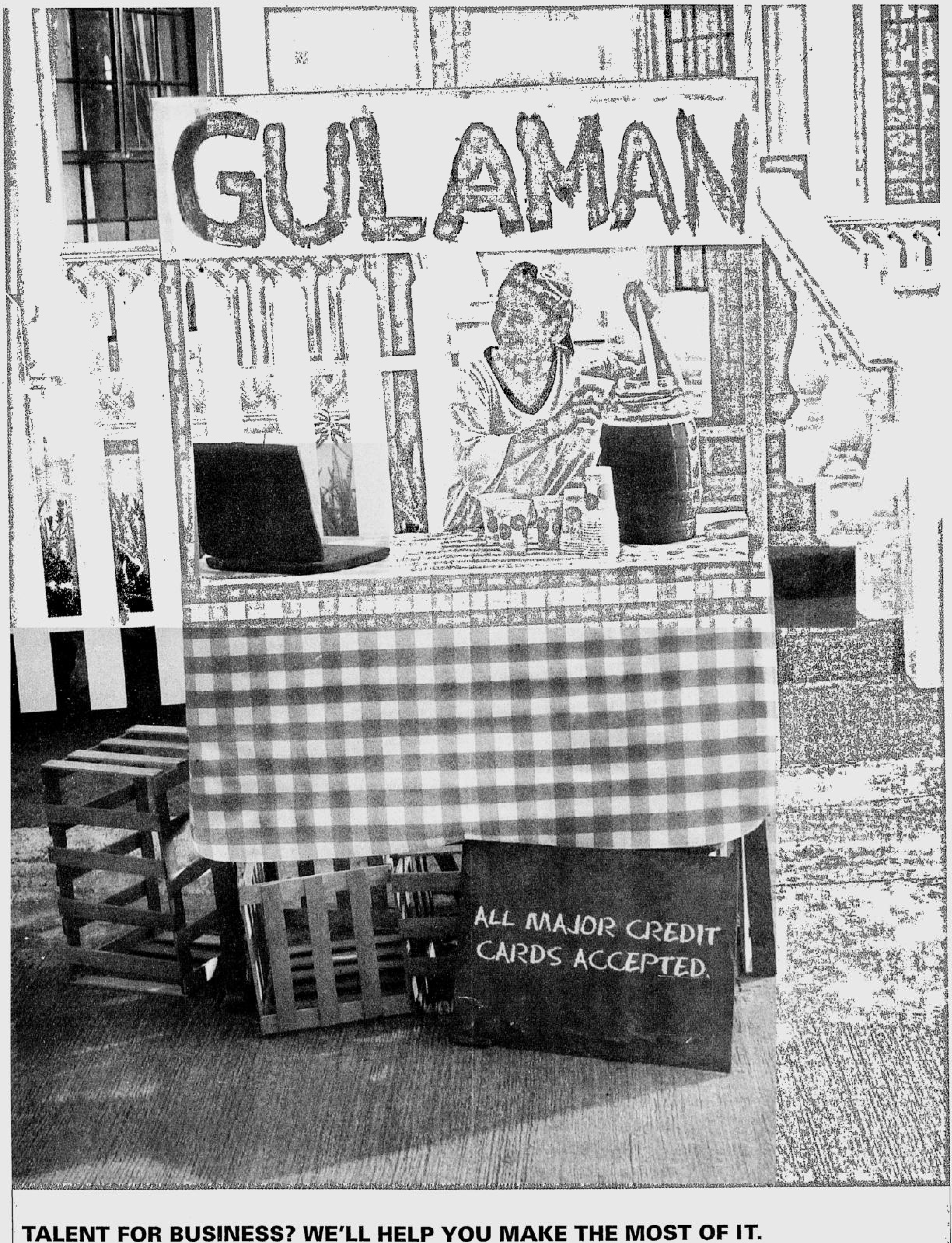

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AL
DAX
TOGOE
SD

Surf or Sk8:
A Q&A with the royal leaders of fear

By Neil D. Galang
2bU! Correspondent

ON a bright, fine, sunny day, most of us will hit the courts and fields: playing tennis, basketball, golf, or whatever games we fancy. But for some people, these games are just—well, "games", and they would prefer the adrenalin rush from riding their boards. But what exactly are surfing and skateboarding? To get the real score, you have to talk to those individuals who brave either a 12-foot wave or a rough, steep concrete obstacle. So we chatted with some skateboarders (Red, Dax, Jazz Togoe, and Augie) and surfers (Al Villaos and SD) over a few beers and gin pomelo.

Q: How does one become a skater or surfer?

Sk8:

Red: You start by getting a skateboard you can use—*'di lang yung maporma*. It helps *kung may kilala kang* hardcore skater *rin* who can help you check the trucks and wheels, the ride, etc.

Dax: One of the legends of Pinoy skateboarding, Ansay, started with one board. He treated his skateboard like an extension of his body, taking it everywhere, practicing all the time. Now he's a world-class skateboarder. A skater has to prepare himself for the risks—broken bones, bruises — that kind of bravery is the essence of most skaters' attitudes. *Ako, nagsimula sa* envy. I had a classmate in high school who showed-off a lot. *Sabi ko sa sarili ko*: *"Yan ang gusto kong gawin!"*

Augie: *Pero hindi puro porma* and attitude *ang* skateboarding. *Minsan pormang* skater *pero hindi man lang maka-land ng isang* trick.

Togoe: As in all sports, you have to do it for the right reasons, the most important one being the fun factor. *Kung dun ka masaya, eh di* skate!

Surf:

SD: I'm not sure exactly how one becomes a surfer. I didn't choose to become one—it chose me, I guess.

Al: *Tama yan*. Once you decide, get a board and know the type of ride you want.

SD: One of the major hurdles to overcome is fear. Your body also has to adapt to the surfing environment. Aside from the scorching sun and the salt water, you'll have to deal with the irritation of surf wax (Rashes, rashes, rashes!) *pero sanayan lang 'yan.*

Q: What exactly are skateboarding and surfing? Are they purely physical; fun and games?

Red: It's difficult to put into words, but there's a unique high when you successfully land a trick, and you keep trying new tricks.

Dax: Yes! That's the "high" in skateboarding I guess. You conquer your fear, learn as many tricks as you can, and mix these tricks into unique combos. It's more than a sport or game. It's an art form. You constantly create and re-create your trick performance.

SD: Surfing is all about fun to begin with although it has now become a mainstream sport (with sponsors and different gears). Being mainstream isn't all that bad. Who wouldn't want to make a living out of what they love and enjoy?

Al: Yup, *di lang 'yan* fun and games. It's hard to explain the high we get while we're in the water. You spend five seconds or less riding, but those few seconds could last a lifetime. You just want to do them over and over again.

SD: Some hardcore surfers literally sacrifice everything to be in the water. It's no longer physical for these people. Although they won't talk about it, you just feel their vibe.

Q: Any downsides and hassles in skateboarding and surfing?

Togoe: Aside from broken bones and bruises, *nandyan yung* ongoing ban on skateboarding in public places.

Red: Though *medyo lumalaki na ang* community *ng* skaters *at ang* acceptance *ng* skateboarding *dito sa* Philippines, *kulang pa rin ang* skate parks...

Dax: Sometimes, I feel the urge to skate and then *hindi pwede, dahil umuulan*, or super crowded *ang* parks. *Kaya minsan, talagang* skate anywhere *na lang, tapos takbo. Dun din galing ang* enjoyment *eh.*

Augie: *Para sa akin*, major hassle *ang* injury, because in skateboarding, you can hurt yourself big time. *Pero kasama talaga ang* risk (in skateboarding).

Al: *Sa* surfing, *malayo na nga ang biyahe, pag minalas pa, walang alon.*

SD: *Kung saan ang alon, nandoon kami.* When someone hears about a swell, *tawagan na 'yan.* Though *minsan nga lang pagdating mo doon, ang dami ng tao, pero* good vibes *naman lahat kaya lalong masaya.*

Al: *Pag maraming tao, minsan* bad *trip* because you have to wait your turn *pero*, like SD said, *masaya rin* because you get to meet lots of interesting people from all over the world.

Q: What can you say about the notion that skaters and surfers are bums, punks, and slackers?

Skaters: *"Bahala sila basta masaya kami!"*

Surfers: It's sad that we're stereotyped like that, but we don't care. We're having fun surfing.

Q: Any last words?

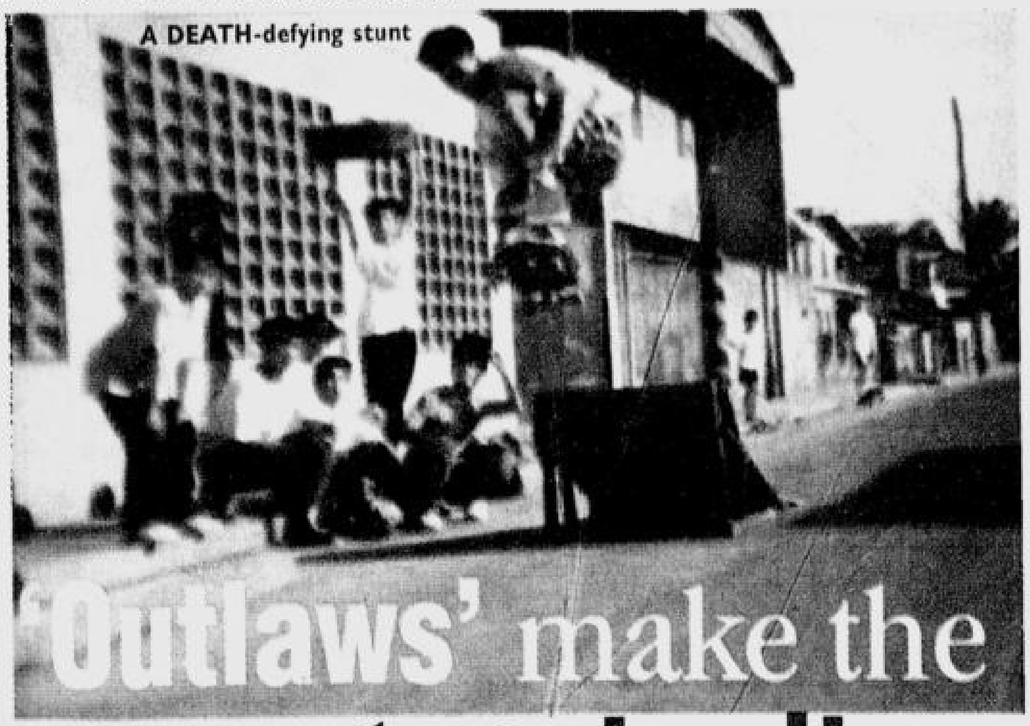
Red: Never quit. It's all about attitude and dedication.

Dax: Try skateboarding. It's better than sex!

Al: Better than sex? *Ako, sex pa rin!*" (laughs) Seriously, surfing is the search for a windless day, an empty beach and the perfect wave."

SD: It's all about respect, and umm...we need more beer."

With reports from Brando Umali



A DEATH-defying stunt

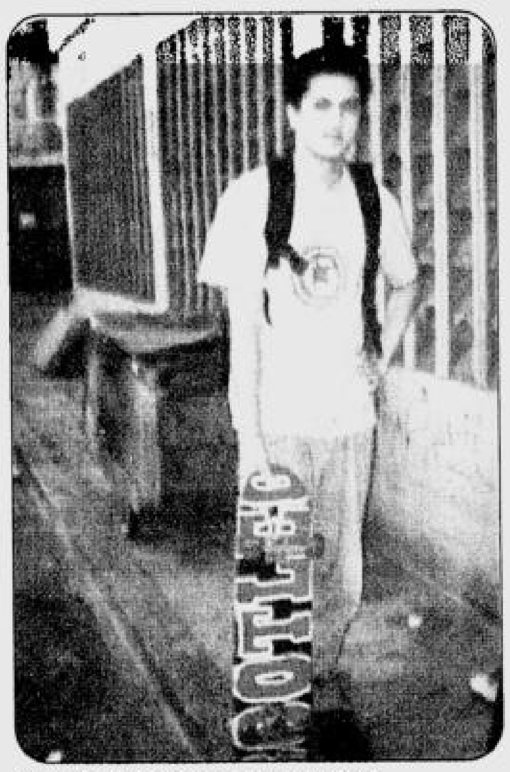
'Outlaws' make the street their territory

Text and photos by Giles Ivan A. Aquino
2bu! Correspondent

FOR ALMOST 10 years that I have passed the street of Aglipay in Mandaluyong City, a few blocks from where I live, I always come across some young men who seem to be ordinary *tambays*, if not for their skateboards.

Setting up an interview with the boys was hard but my perseverance paid off. I was finally able to talk to one, Joy Tan, who turned out to be a fine arts graduate of the University of Santo Tomas. *"Hindi naman kami* fraternity or anything. *Walang* initiation *na nagaganap sa grupo. Kung* trip *mo lang mag*-skateboard, in *ka na.*"

From a distance, skateboarding looked easy, but when I asked Joy how one could learn it, he said, "*Mahirap talaga sa una. Kung gusto mo talagang matuto kailangan mo ng* total confidence and be ready [to suffer] bone fractures. *Natural lang yon.*"



JOY Tan: Skateboard Specialist

Old hangout

Aglipay has actually been a skateboarding venue even when Joy was still in high school. Now it has more a sentimental value than anything. A wooden ramp the skateboarders themselves made, make the stunts more exciting. I learned that they were known as the Aglipay "outlaws". "Since second year high school *pa lang dito na kami sa* Aglipay *nag-ii*-skateboard," Joy said.

Besides Aglipay Street, open spaces at the back of Megamall, Greenhills, Pasig and Makati are also venues. *"Mahirap mag-stay sa isang lugar kasi parati kaming hinuhuli ng pulis. Napaaway na din ako minsan."* Their reason for taking up the sport: *"Kaysa naman mag-drugs kami."*

Skateboarding, which is officially banned on the streets, is not a cheap sport. A new skateboard costs around P8,000. Joy said boards had to be replaced often because they were vulnerable to pressure and tension. *"Ang* usually *madaling masira* is the board. One time, two weeks *pa lang ang* skateboard *ko*, brand-new, then because of the stunts, it split into two." The board alone costs around P2,500.

With the cost of maintenance, one might well turn skateboarding into a profession, but Joy said the reality in the Philippines was very different from that in the United States where one could be a professional skateboarder because there was funding. Local skateboarders find it hard to get sponsors. *"Kaya mahirap maging* profession *ang* skateboarding *dito sa atin. Pero 'pag may* chance *na puwede na siyang gawing* source of income, *bakit hindi?"* Joy says.

He still dreams of seeing his childhood hobby become a popular sport in the Philippines. He would like to see the next generation of skateboarders with their own place for executing their own stunts without fear of being arrested and when he would no longer be considered an outlaw.

E-mail the author at gilesaquino@edsamail.com.ph

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Hit your new target.

Musings about my love for the game

ILLUSTRATION: ALBERT RODRIGUEZ

By Gary Mercado
2bU! Correspondent

3 P.M., Saturday. I sit at the sidelines waiting for my turn at the game. Occasionally my mind drifts, and I start thinking about other parts of my week—my work, people, my health. Situations people around the world deal with on a daily basis. Inadvertently I start looking intently at my feet.

I hear a shout and the ground starts to rumble. I lift my head to see a fast break at full gallop. Someone stole the ball from the other side and another sprints as fast as he can, asking for a pass. It soars toward him as an opponent gives chase.

The defender chases as hard as he can, but he's half a step behind. The guy with the ball catches in rhythm, dribbles the ball once and even takes the time to glance at his defender as his body assumes the graceful arch of a perfect lay-up, bouncing the ball across the board into the hoop, giving the board a slight tap coming down. He gives his defender a wink and a smile, quickly met with good-natured jeering from us.

The fast break awakens me from my stupor. I remember what I'm there for again. It's summer, the sky is blue and the courts are waiting. It's time to play ball.

My attitude

Years ago, to put some life into my summers, I was put through the obligatory summer lessons. I had swimming and tennis, which were both well and good, but unfortunately the snobbish kids at the equally snobbish country clubs didn't appeal to me.

At home I took up classic piano lessons from a lady with an enormous hairdo and overwhelming perfume. Until now, whenever I hear Chopin or Bach I get dizzy from memories of a *matrona*-type fragrance. Our piano continues to sit quite still at home.

Unfortunately for my parents I was strictly a street kid, as proven when I skipped tennis lessons to play half-court ball across the street against the *pulot* boys. The ironic thing is, from that rundown, uneven, badly maintained court, and eventually other courts like it all over the city, I learned many of the lessons I was supposed to have learned from the clubs at P500 per hour.

I learned that even the best players in the world miss more shots than they sink, and that what sets them apart is that they keep trying till they get it right. I learned that sports bring out the best and worst in people, and that a playing court magnifies one's character several times over. I learned about being tough, and that it's never in how you strut around talking about yourself or wearing Michael Jordan's shoes. I learned that, for the most part, it's best to keep your mouth shut—and let your game do the talking for you.

I learned that even if you sprain a finger or an ankle, it can't ever compare to the hurt of losing a game you tried your hardest to win. On the other hand, I also discovered the intense, pulsating feeling of "winning time," when all five guys on the court seem to mesh as one single, harmonious unit to achieve a common goal.

And for the first time in my life I learned to become good at something. I experienced the sweet taste of confidence, and of being part of a team, which is essentially a "brotherhood"—a relationship second only to being actual brothers. Being part of one has taught me to hold my head up high, knowing I'm no pushover, but not too high, knowing there's always someone who can kick my butt. It's the one lesson that has helped me achieve whatever success I've had throughout the years.

My kin

Even though we shared many games together, I hardly know many of the guys I regularly play with. I know one is a med student, and plays to relieve the stress of studying. A rowdy group of five is composed of varsity high school kids. Another one is a seaman, and many others I know nothing about. They're just like me, guys hanging out at the basketball court.

Most of these guys are okay, but some are people I wouldn't trade two words with. One is an intimidating congressman's son with the required bodyguards and Ford truck. Another is a Chinese family man who brings his kids to games. I have nothing at all in common with them, and other than the weather and traffic, our conversations are pretty dull so I don't even try.

On the court, however, we are kin, and are on another plane where we understand each other. I can give instructions and be given them as well. But among them there is one that will always stand out.

Years ago there was a kid older than me who played in the same courts in Mandaluyong all day long. I would see him practicing jump shot after jump shot, free throw after free throw, waiting for others to come. I started joining him as early as 5 a.m., and we played one on one. He would beat me all the time, sometimes even limiting himself to just jump shots. I would be frustrated, but it was okay. Each time I observed what he was doing and eventually he started to take me more seriously.

One day we started playing just like many times before. But today was different. For every point he made, I would catch up. He would lay up, I would shoot. He would shoot, I'd do another one. It came to a point when we had reached 30 points even, and the next shot would win it. I had the ball, and then did a move I watched him do hundreds of times. I faked to the left, then dribbled with my right and lunged. He fell for it, I stepped back and took a jump shot. Sometimes you know from the time you release it that it was going in. This was one of them. I won.

Funny how, when you finally experience a moment you've worked hard to get, you don't do everything you always thought you'd do. I didn't shout and stare him down. I didn't beat my chest and claimed superiority. I looked at him, smiling with his eyes wide open in surprise, and I realized I was grinning like a clown. I beat him, but I had so much respect for him. I'm not going to say I was lucky, because he played me hard. But he was still The Man, and I'll never forget that. I just happened to win.

His talent blossomed and he eventually played in the PBA. Sometimes we would meet, but despite his status he still treats me the same. Again here's another man I would normally not have anything to share with, but because of those sessions years ago early in the morning in a rundown smelly court in Mandaluyong, we are brothers.

Love for the game

I love basketball. Other than writing, it's one of the constants in my life. I know, however, that we'll never qualify for the Olympics. Hell, I doubt if we'll even make it to the Asiad. As a Filipino, I consider our obsession with the sport a cruel irony. We're far better off playing soccer, baseball or tennis, and unless we collectively face reality and adopt a new national pastime, we will face year after year of disappointment, anguish and defeat.

Regardless, I continue to play. The basketball courts of my youth are permanent fixtures in my dreams, and whenever I need to figure things out, I shoot hoops alone in the park and the answer comes to me. Although I play and enjoy other sports, nothing compares to spending a free day on the courts with the dudes, wheeling and dealing the ball, lunging forward then going back shooting, throwing off your defender as the ball sails through the air.

If it goes in, you're the man. If it doesn't, well, they'll let you know. Whatever happens, there is always talk—noisy, senseless jeering punctuated by lots of laughing. I love it. I cannot for the life of me think of a better way to spend my weekend.

Reality

Another shout wakens me from my daydreaming again. One of the guys calls out to me, telling me to suit up. I start tying my shoelaces. The game is winding up and it will be our turn next. As I get up and stretch, I look up at the sky. It's a beautiful summer day, not a cloud in sight. The wind is blowing a slight breeze. Not too hot, not too cold.

They call out to me to hurry. I start jogging toward the group, trying hard to suppress a smile. I can't help it. A popular ad puts it succinctly, "Another day, another chance to play ball."

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Down with sports!

By Marco Villanueva
2bU! Correspondent

I AM not into sports.

Looking back at my scarred childhood, I could probably attribute my distaste of athletics to my earliest sports-related memory: dodge ball, or what other kids my age used to lovingly refer to as *dadsbol*. (One more "s" in the end would change the whole game and turn it into something patriarchal, if not, a bizarre game referring to a father's scrotum.)

I used to love dodge ball. It was the most primal game. Ideally, there would be two teams on either side and a few idiots in the middle who were supposed to dodge as they were pelleted with the ball—thus, the name. I say *ideally* because I rarely had the opportunity to play it in *reality*. In fact, in my life, I can swear (on a pile of Qurans) that I—considering that I have all my fingers firmly attached—could count the number of instances I have played dodge ball using my two hands.

You see, when you're the *unico hijo*, and "youngest" sister is 3 or 4 years older, then you're stuck to playing dodge ball against a wall. You stand in front of a wall, hurl the ball at it and run frantically. This is an exercise at idiocy, but eventually, you learn the laws of physics and trigonometry—tangents being of great import.

Years later in grade school, dodge ball gave way to basketball, and physics and trigonometry gave way to mathematics. This was a whole new, um, ball game. The only basketball-related memory that comes to mind is the one time I wanted to cross from one side of the basketball court to the other and—wham!—some idiot hit me in the head with the basketball. (I could have said that some ball hit me in the head, but that would make *me* the idiot for blaming the ball.)

It was the first time I ever blacked out—the second time while driving along Temple Drive in White Plains and my car crashed into an owner-type jeep, but I digress—and I can say for certain that it did feel like one of those Looney Tunes cartoons: you do see stars, oh and how they twinkle, indeed! Where was I?

More balls

High school, and more balls came my way. I transferred to a school exclusively for boys. (To this day, I cannot understand why people refer to it as an exclusive school for boys when the only thing that makes it exclusive is the fact that it's only for boys!) We had soccer (or was it football, lord knows what we call it in these parts!), basketball and volleyball.

Needless to say, my participation was kept to the barest minimum. I would huff and puff and grudgingly trudge to either end of the court (or field) and, minutes later, call it a day. With my newfound maturity, however, I was able to come up with a more processed reason I do not like basketball.

It is an absurd sport. You have two teams, 10 ogres, running after the same ball. As soon as an idiot gets the ball, he tries hard to shoot it. Successful or otherwise, he ends up losing: the ball never stays in the damn basket. I suggest that a new team sport be created: teams will be asked to roll a boulder up a mountain; for the rules, refer to Greek mythology, look under Sisyphus.

College came and I finally got to choose how I could be educated physically, thus, I chose the more esoteric arts (that would go well with my Bahasa Indonesia foreign language): *tai chi* and *arnis*. (The other two courses don't really count; I didn't have much of a choice so I took up tennis, and we were required to take some PE 101 course about atrophy and dystrophy, apparently to make up for the trophies that our school has not been getting for the past basketball seasons.)

Anyway, I survived. Here comes the crucial part: reflection. I could think of a few things worth noting about sports and, perhaps, they can all be skewered by this statement: a sport is important to the psychological, emotional, physiological, teleological, spiritual and ontological development of a human being—but not indispensable. You see, I learned the truth at an age much earlier than the proverbial 17: love is meant not simply for beauty queens but also for everyone else *but* those whose names *weren't* called when choosing sides for basketball. It is only when puberty or adolescence kicks in that we realize the true value of sports.

Maybe women have sensors for evolution that go: "Hmm! The way he dribbles the ball makes me dribble, and that makes him fit for consumption, er, procreation!" This is the reason love is blind—it's because it's a sense of evolution. The survival of the species does not depend on looks the way colorful feathers work for birds. In our case, as a species, beauty is only skin deep. The real essence lies in being able to set off the evolution sensors in women that will make them wish to propagate the species with you—or, at least, make her go out with you.

Case in point: I have seen big lugs (i.e. athletes with misshapen faces that look like they've had a bad case of pituitary gland-stimulation) hook up with ethereal beings (i.e. shapely women with angelic faces)—and I am sure it's not the guy's personality! Oh, then again, I could just be sour-graping.

Going together

Education and sports go together—but whether or not they should is another thing altogether. First, sports retard education; thus, one ends up regressing. In my case, had I not entered grade school and been force-fed basketball and mathematics, I might have been on my way to discovering greater things: a new law of physics, perhaps? But no, they just had to take me away from my comfortable wall so I could learn the multiplication table.

Second, sports is not education. I remember our school's academic vice president. During one of our spirited discussions in our epistemology class, she remarked: "If you've never been to an X (the name of our school)-Y (the name of our rival school—only insofar as basketball is concerned) basketball game, then you're missing half of your life!" (At the rate this expression has been aimed my way, I lost enough life times than a cat would have in its reserves.)

This second point is really very crucial. You see, schools have a mentality that, somehow, basketball teams add to their prestige. Many hours have been wasted—oops Freudian (or honest?) slip—by many a board of trustees' meeting talking about how to improve the school's basketball team. (If only they spent more time talking about how to improve our academic standing, then maybe our school's rating in the Asiaweek survey would start marching up again—then again, hasn't Asiaweek folded up? Once again, I digress.)

Eventually we all graduate and realize that, indeed, sports teaches us a lot about life. We learn that athletes get not just special attention but benefits as well. They get scholarships and perks. In fact, even if they are late for registration, they can go complaining to the assistant deans—and these minions themselves would fix their registration, just so that these athletes won't have a hard time in certain classes.

We learn that athletes are special people. We learn that by virtue of their being special, they get really high salaries as opposed to their batchmates who slave over their diplomas and get stuck in low-paying jobs. In fact, some of these athletes don't even have diplomas and yet they earn millions a year.

Oh, I probably have to stop now, or else I will sound like I'm just bitching. Then again, with the way things are, how can I not—bitch, I mean?

Let me end, then with one last reflection: an attempt at being more positive. Two last lessons. First, life is about balls. If one wants to succeed in life, then one has to have the balls. Second, a lesson I learned from *arnis*—sticks won't always break your bones, but they can, at the very least, leave you bruised.

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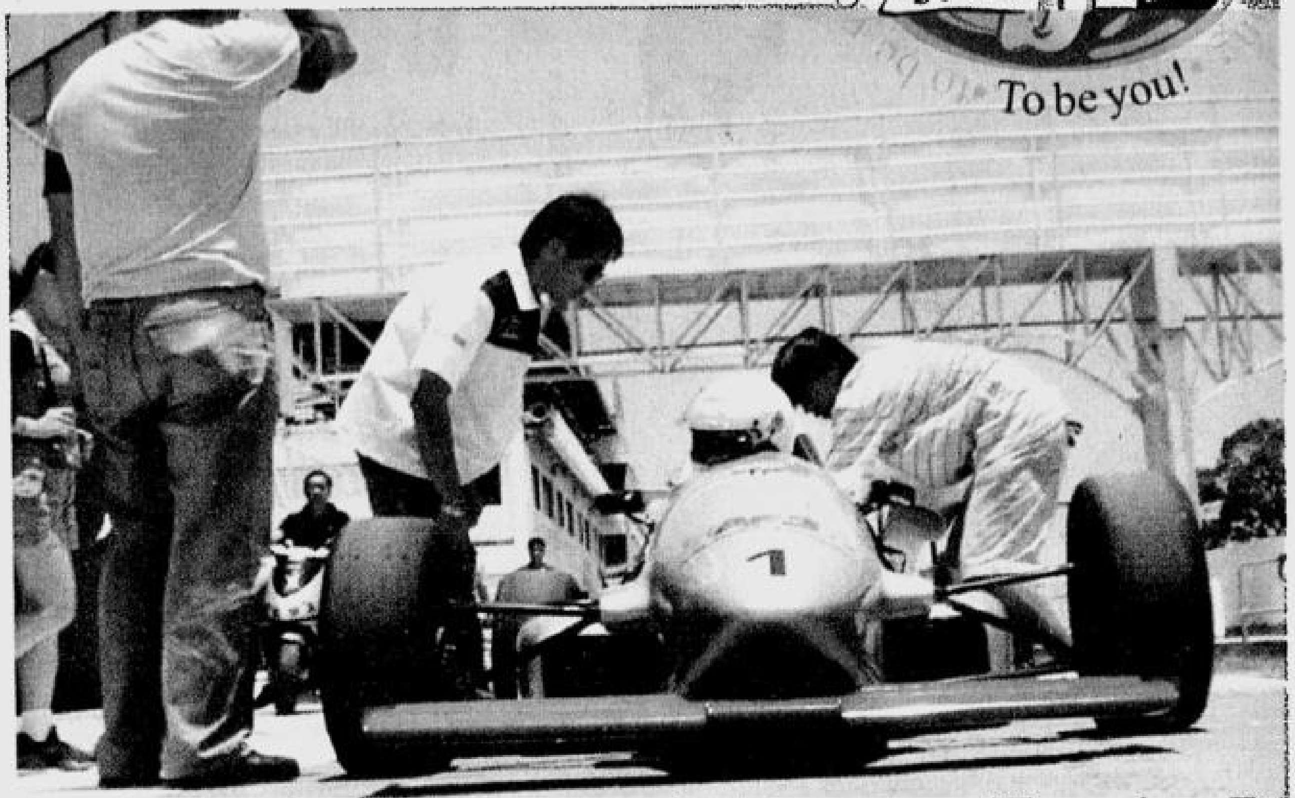

'Jill of all Trades'

By Maui V. Reyes
2bU! Correspondent

I met the lovely Michelle Pritchard for the first time back in 2000 during a fashion shoot. Still a part of a folk-pop band, Michelle was lugging her violin around during the shoot, and talking about her dreams of stepping back in time to be in the original casts of famous Broadway plays.

Two years later, I met up again with the England-born powerhouse, who now excitedly talks about racing and her new job.

"I'm working for C! magazine right now, as associate editor," she gushes. "The first issue came out in March. It's a bimonthly magazine, and it's about cars and racing."

Race car enthusiasts would probably have heard of the spunky Pritchard, the brunette who finished third overall in the four-hour Enduro race. If you own an Imago CD, you'd probably know that she used to fiddle for a band. Others might even have spotted her wall climbing or jet-skiing.

"It's pretty bad," Michelle once said. "I keep doing all these things. It's like trying to be a 'Jill of All Trades'."

Getting started

Michelle's hero while growing up was her dad. "He was a single parent, and he brought up my brother and me." Michelle says it was hard for him to raise two kids by himself, and she gives him points for doing a good job. "We struggled at times, but he brought us up well. He always guided us."

The downside to living with two men? "They don't really bring you dolls to play with," she says. "I'd always have to go over to friends' houses to play with dolls." Although Michelle loved to play dress-up and do all those girlie things, her brother wasn't keen on joining the make-believe tea parties. "My brother was really into football, and he'd make me the goalie," she remembers. "So I had to get tough to miff my brother a little bit."

Michelle wasn't totally lacking in everything feminine in their house. Since like most girls, she wanted to be a ballerina, for 10 years, Michelle donned the tutu and ballet shoes as she tried to achieve that dream. At age seven, she picked up the violin. "I wanted to go to those 'royal schools' of music, you know, playing in the orchestras and stuff," she says. "But then it was too competitive, and I got discouraged, and it's like a snobbish kind of community." Aside from the company, she wasn't into the strict practice regimen required.

In high school, Michelle was into track and field, the javelin, and was also part of the volleyball team. She was also involved in tennis ("I didn't compete or anything. It was more of a school club thing.") and, in college, joined the Outdoor Club. "Even though I was short, I jumped really high, so they got me," she laughs. "In high school [back in England], everyone was forced to do sports. You have no choice, you have to."

The Next Step

At age 18, Michelle came here for college. She wanted something more laid-back. Looking for a different environment and experience, she chose the Philippines.

After dropping her violin lessons, she picked up the instrument again in 1997 when she joined Imago. "I never imagined that I would be in a band. My friend in England had a band, and I used to think it sucked," she recalls. "I didn't like his music, and I didn't like his lifestyle too much. I was too innocent to be in that sort of scene." Her Imago gig lasted for three years. But after recording an indie release, she became interested in racing.

In 1998, Michelle answered an ad in the papers for a magazine writer.

She had no idea what she was getting into. "I just thought, 'Oh, what the hell'. I gave my application, and the next thing I knew, they were calling for an interview." Only after the interview did she find out that it was a car magazine. The problem? "I don't know anything about cars," she winces.

Luckily, she told the staff that she liked driving. "[They said:] 'Oh so you know how to drive. You're hired!'" she says.

"*Yun pala*, they just wanted a girl who could drive because they needed to have one female driver to join the media challenge." Michelle jumped in, loved it, and ended up joining the next three challenges. "That gave me the opportunity to join the racing circuit. Pocholo Ramirez, the guy who's in charge of SVI in Subic, wanted a partner for his daughter-in-law (Menchie Francisco) to race in Enduro." Michelle and Menchie ended up third. Not bad for a pair of novices just out for a good ride. Michelle joined the Challenge Cup the following year. "The two rounds that I joined, I placed first and third," she enthuses.

The whole racing thing posed a problem for Michelle. Imago had gotten a record deal with Viva and band practices got in the way of Michelle's racing. "I kind of missed out on a lot of gigs," she confesses. "I couldn't commit because if I signed that contract, I had to stop racing. So I said: Just acknowledge that I made the album with you guys, and it's sort of bye bye from here." Michelle left the band and, although she would love to jam with them again on some gigs, "If I don't practice regularly I don't think (it would be fair to them)." But her violin wouldn't be gathering dust for a long time. "If something comes along in the future and I have the time to do it, I'll pick it up again."

Burn, baby, burn

Michelle isn't participating this season on the track, since she wasn't able to find a sponsor.

"My friends are telling me to look for beauty endorsers like make-up companies to give it that girlie edge." Michelle may be aiming for a beauty sponsor, but on the track guys treat her like one the boys. "People here treat me with a lot of respect. Sometimes they tease me but it's all in jest. They're proud that there's a girl who races, and they get challenged," she laughs.

Men must be getting used to having their butts kicked by this girl. "My proudest moment would have to be the first time I got on the track in the circuit, and finished third overall. We were one of the few novices there on the podium. We finished a four-hour race in the middle of the afternoon, under the heat. Even though we felt like fainting after the race, it was such a fantastic feeling."

Burning up the tracks doesn't always end with medals and champagne-popping. Asked what her biggest failure is, she laughs, "Wow, got a lot of those! I guess it would be the second year of the media challenge, when I was working so hard to at least top the female category, and this other girl beat me by a millisecond. I got second place. It rained during my run, while hers was dry…and I was just a little bit off the run. I felt really, really bad about that." She pauses, "Can I cry now?"

Behind the wheel

"Most people think (racing) is not a sport for girls. They think it's rough," Michelle says, rolling her eyes. "But girls are doing just as well as the guys. Women are more challenged by tasks that were previously known as men's sports." With roll cages in cars and tons of safety equipment, it is not as risky as some people would think. "It's very rare that you find people dying or getting into huge accidents. It's a great sport since it gives a great adrenaline rush. It makes you feel good about yourself."

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> Women are more challenged by tasks that were previously known as men's sports

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Hong Kong is eXhilarating

WINNING is exhilirating. Gregory Ho (far left) and David Leung (far right) pose with the winners

Surviving Subic

From page F8

orienteering and commando mud crawling, among others.

All the action

The Subic race started as early as 7 a.m., beginning with the one-kilometer swim and kayaking out in the Dungaree beach. With the triangular direction of the course, we saw who emerged as leaders of the race. At this point, we also began to see that these participants were human, as some had their tongues hanging out of their mouths in exhaustion. We were so absorbed with all the action that was happening.

After completing the swim, the racers were off to the "abseiling & rope work" course, which looked like one of those power-up walls. To get there, they had to run for about a kilometer or two. Again, we witnessed all the action of the road run first hand as we passed by them in our air-conditioned coaster. We even took their pictures despite the window that separated us, although later on, we decided to get off the bus for better photos. For a moment, I felt guilty for the participants. They were attractions. They were like Subic's monkeys. Really well-built monkeys.

When we reached Upper Man, where the wall was set up, we were reminded by the organizers that teammates had to be together all the time because if one of them failed to finish the race, then they risked being disqualified. This was very important because in instances wherein one team member collapsed in exhaustion, then his teammate would have to carry him. However, during this particular event, collapsing, even pausing, seemed far from the minds of the participants. The leading teams hardly allocated time for rest.

After having rappelled down the walls, they moved on to the forest race, which wasn't easy at all. The trail was slippery and steep that we decided to leave all the action to the racers and get straight to lunch. It was the last physical discipline of the entire race, for after that, the mental agility test awaited them.

The test consisted of questions about Hong Kong, of which the answers were available at www.DiscoverHongKong.com. Only the top ten teams with the fastest time during the race were qualified to take it.

'Kulelat' no more

Later in the afternoon, when it was announced at the end of the Subic Qualifying Round for the Hong Kong AXN Challenge that *Kulelat* won the trip to Hong Kong, the team was surprised, but not exactly at peace with the decision. After all, it wasn't like any other trip to the city of life—shopping was definitely not high on the list of priorities. Ernie Lopez and Martin Villarica, the "*kulelats*" who were announced as the Philippines representatives, were going to race with four other Asian teams in a battle of brawn and wit. Instead of strolling along Tsim Sha Tsui or sightseeing at The Peak, they had to sweat it all out in nine disciplines, which included mountain trail running, kayaking and tunneling.

RUNNING away: Two racers try to catch up.

According to Martin, their win was definitely unexpected. "We just didn't think we'd win. In adventure races like these, our primary goal is to finish the race and outdo our performance in previous challenges." Besides, they felt that they weren't exactly the most experienced among the participants.

Later on, David Leung, regional director for South & South Asia of the Hong Kong Tourism Board and Gregory Ho, vice-president for marketing of AXN Asia, felt that since the second placers, Team AMCI 1 finished with a respective time, they got to qualify for the open category of the challenge in Hong Kong. In this category, anyone, even without national representation can join the race.

Now that is definitely worth getting up from your couch for.

New Blazer lighting a fire in many young women's hearts

By Bunny Anne Gapit
2bU! Correspondent

JONDAN Salvador or simply Bujong seems to be the very prototype of a hardcourt heartthrob. At 21, he joined the MBA's Davao Eagles.

You're in good spirits today. What happened?

My team is still ecstatic having won the recent match against Cebu Gems. Our families were cheered by the good news, too.

Congrats. Seems that the Gems are on your side and not in Cebu's after all…

Well, it's a team effort. Just the fruit of some really tough regimen.

I heard you're popular as a player…

Successful maybe, but not popular. MBA, I admit, is the pivotal point in my playing career. Being able to do what I love to do, is success in itself. Achieving (what I have) in such a short time is a bonus.

Is MBA too time-consuming that it clashed with your studies?

Since this is what I've wanted to do from Day One, I guess it just has to take precedence. I don't think living one's dream should be delayed. I believe we should embrace and leap at opportunities once the doors are opened. We don't let the grass grow under our feet, you know.

Sure MBA has its perks, stature and prestige but where does the shoe pinch?

Hmm…Major downside in my case would be distance. We usually hold our matches in Davao, and once in a while we change venues and go to other provinces. Being away from family and friends is the price I pay for achieving my goal. I try to ease things by constantly reloading my phone—that's all I really need to do to keep in touch. On the other hand, socializing with my pals out here comes easy…

What in your athletic life is the next best experience to MBA?

Landing in the Mythical 5 at the end of the NCAA 2001 season. Not only that I was somehow singled out. Modesty aside, I'm the first Blazer (Benilde's basketball varsity team) to conquer such a feat.

How does your girlfriend Arnie react to those girls ogling you?

With equanimity, I guess, because I always reassure her. Plus I'm not really a good mixer with girls, nowadays. *Takot na akong mabati…*

Huh?

One time in Davao I was on the beach and I came across a group of girls who thought I was cute. The next day, I started growing enormous zits on my face, which did not disappear for three months! The medication really cost a lot.

Does that mean girls need not tell you you're cute (laughs)?

Yes, *alam ko na yon* (laughs, too).

If you're not a basketball player, what would you be doing?

Probably invent basketball. Master passion, *eh*.

Who do you credit for developing your love of the game?

My uncle who was among the first to notice my potential, my coach who imparts to us his methods, to my girlfriend who loves me and who I love back three times more, my family who rejoices in my every success, and especially God who gave me the skills.

Would you have some food for the thought?

Don't waste your gifts. Use them for your advancement preferably, while you are still in the full pride of youth.

Bujong's sentence-completion test:

1. **In the last two minutes of my life, I want to…** catch up and bond with my father who left a long time ago.
2. **I'd cry foul if…** someone tries to hurt my mother because hurting her is like hurting me, but more.
3. **Power forward is when…** I have successfully given my family a better life. It would even be better if I could extend help to the needy ones out there.
4. **The girls could "free throw" themselves at me if…** I let them.
5. **My dream muse is…** Anna Kournikova.

GEORGE Lucas directs C-3PO.

AMIDALA in a romantic scene with Skywalker

The 'STAR WARS' empire strikes again

From page F1

to Tatooine. Just when you think you're all dueled out, Lucas throws in another, even more death-defying battle. Perhaps the only real weakness of this movie is the clunky, saccharine and rather contrived love story that seems force-fed into "Attack of the Clones."

Another great element to "Attack of the Clones" is how much Lucas gives back to devoted fans. Let's just say the Jedi (including one particular future denizen of Dagobah) get to show off. We get to meet bounty hunter Jango Fett (Temeura Morrison) and Lucas, amazingly enough, does the next to impossible: use annoying Jar Jar Binks (Ahmed Best) in an understated and pivotal role.

Portman really doesn't have to do much in her role except to alternately run for her life and to glow with otherworldly beauty, both of which she does exceptionally well. McGregor seems somewhat manacled by the straight-laced role of Obi-Wan, particularly after his sparkling turns in "Moulin Rouge" and "Black Hawk Down." Christopher Lee makes for an interesting presence as the villainous Count Dooku, though it feels like he's channeling Saruman from Peter Jackson's "The Lord of the Rings."

Much attention

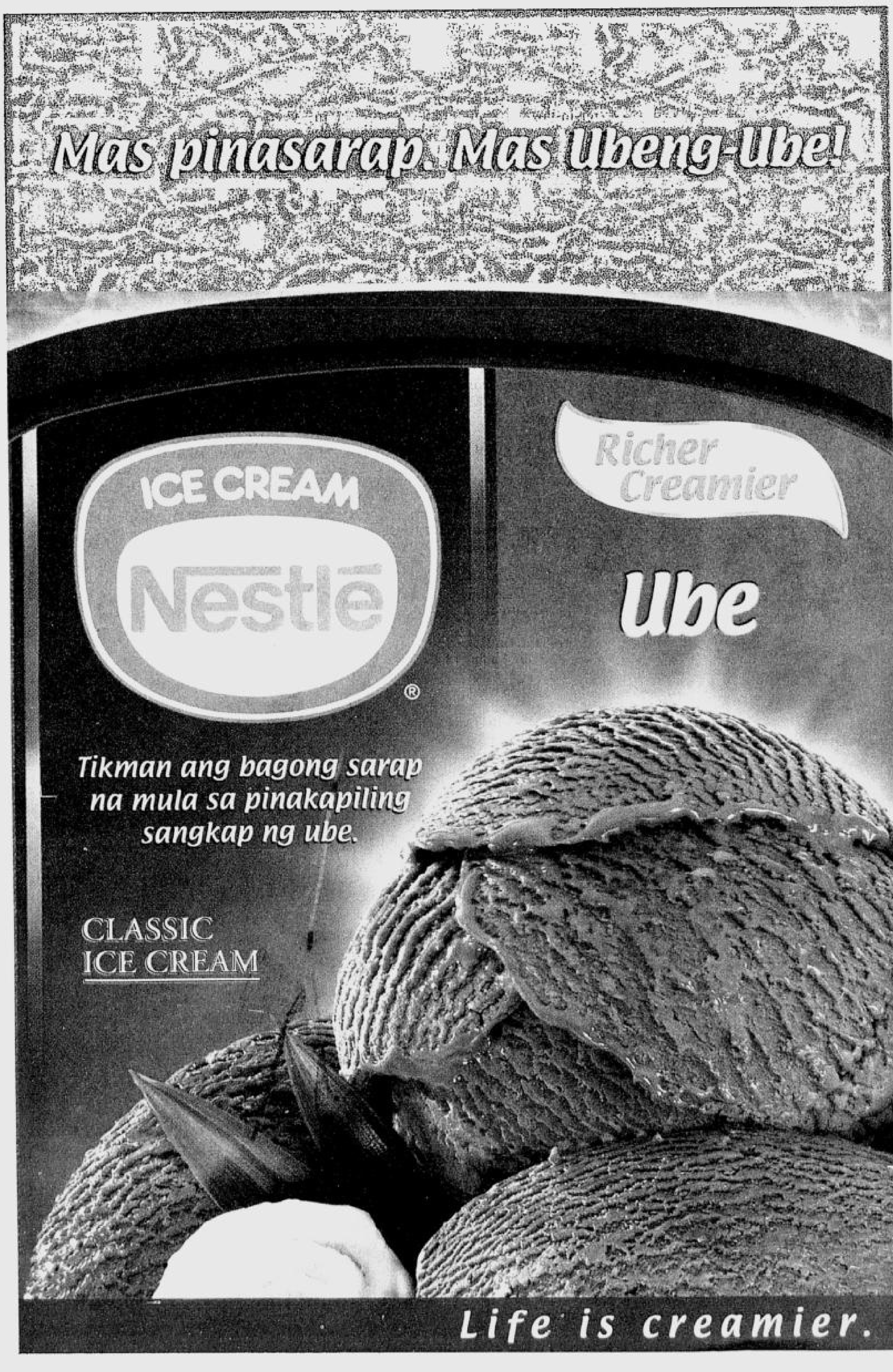
But much attention will be placed on the performance of Christensen, who portrays Anakin's man-child anger and frustration with mopey abandon: the perfect depiction of a GenY Jedi. He does his angry best to show how the gifted, emotional young Jedi could conceivably become the most terrible Dark Lord of them all.

In a way, "Attack of the Clones" is proof positive that CGI really is taking over the motion picture industry, but it has to be said that, for the most part, the landscapes and characters in this movie are impressively realistic in appearance and movement. In fact, Lucas harnesses CGI for the kind of dizzying chase scenes and light-saber battles that were sadly missing from "Phantom Menace." The engagement between the clones and the druids possesses the kind of immediacy missing from the droid-versus-Gungan tussle, and the climactic Jedi encounter thoroughly trounces the Obi-Wan-versus-Darth Maul dukefest. In every aspect, "Attack of the Clones" is superior to its predecessor.

The middle child of the original trilogy, "Star Wars Episode V: The Empire Strikes Back," with its dark events and urgent action, is generally considered the best movie from the original trilogy. We already know that Lucas will reserve his darkest for the next movie. But "Attack of the Clones" makes a convincing case for following "Empire's" lead as the trilogy's best movie, unhampered by introductions and the need to conclude everything. Fans will not be able to resist the urge to applaud during the movie's best scenes, almost as if manipulated easily by Lucas' use of the Force: *You will clap, you will watch this movie, and then watch it again.*

He won't have to, really. With its rich, compelling storylines, sweeping drama, nonstop action and unforgettable characters, George Lucas' "Attack of the Clones" is a rousing, crowd-pleasing offering that gives us a true taste of what a space opera is all about, a Jedi Master of a movie that's truly worthy to be part of the storied "Star Wars" epic.

"Star Wars Episode II: Attack of the Clones" opens in Metro Manila theaters tomorrow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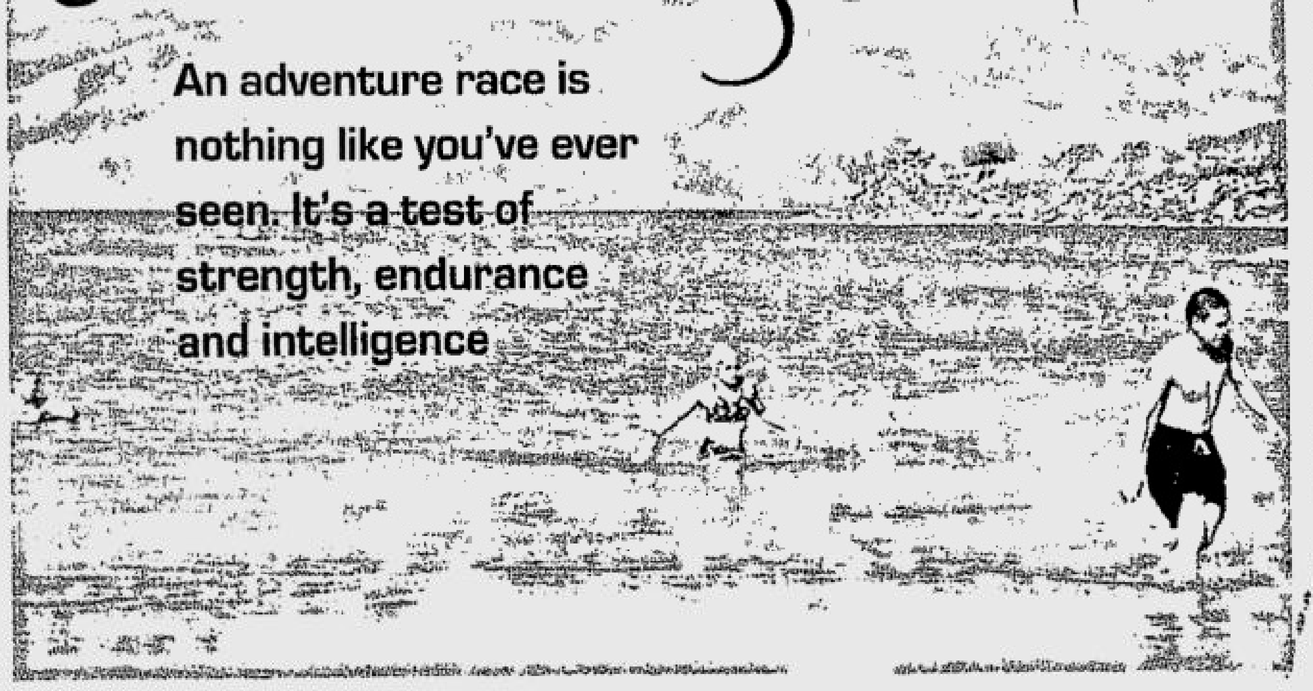

An adventure race is nothing like you've ever seen. It's a test of strength, endurance and intelligence

Text and photos by Jason Doplito

WHEN the action capital of Asia teams up with Asia's first adventure and action cable channel, the result is compelling enough to make you get out of your couch and say, go to Subic.

Hong Kong and AXN Asia worked together to bring this year's first ever HK AXN Challenge. For the Philippine finals, more than 20 adrenaline-seekers got out of the urban jungle of Manila and headed north for some serious muscle-stretching.

However, the race wasn't all physical. The challenge also included a set of questions about Hong Kong and a series of dares that had to be done. The mind wasn't definitely spared in all the action that took place.

Aside from that, participants were also up against some of the best athletes in the country, which included national champions. And of course, the race format wasn't exactly that easy as it involved sea swimming,

SURVIVING/ P.F6

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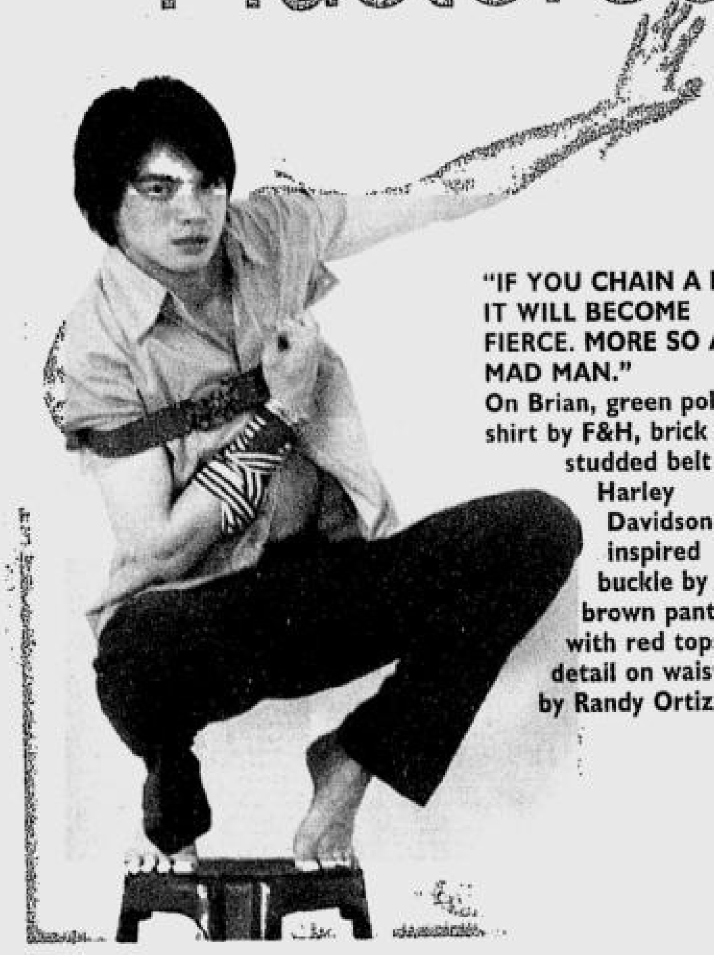
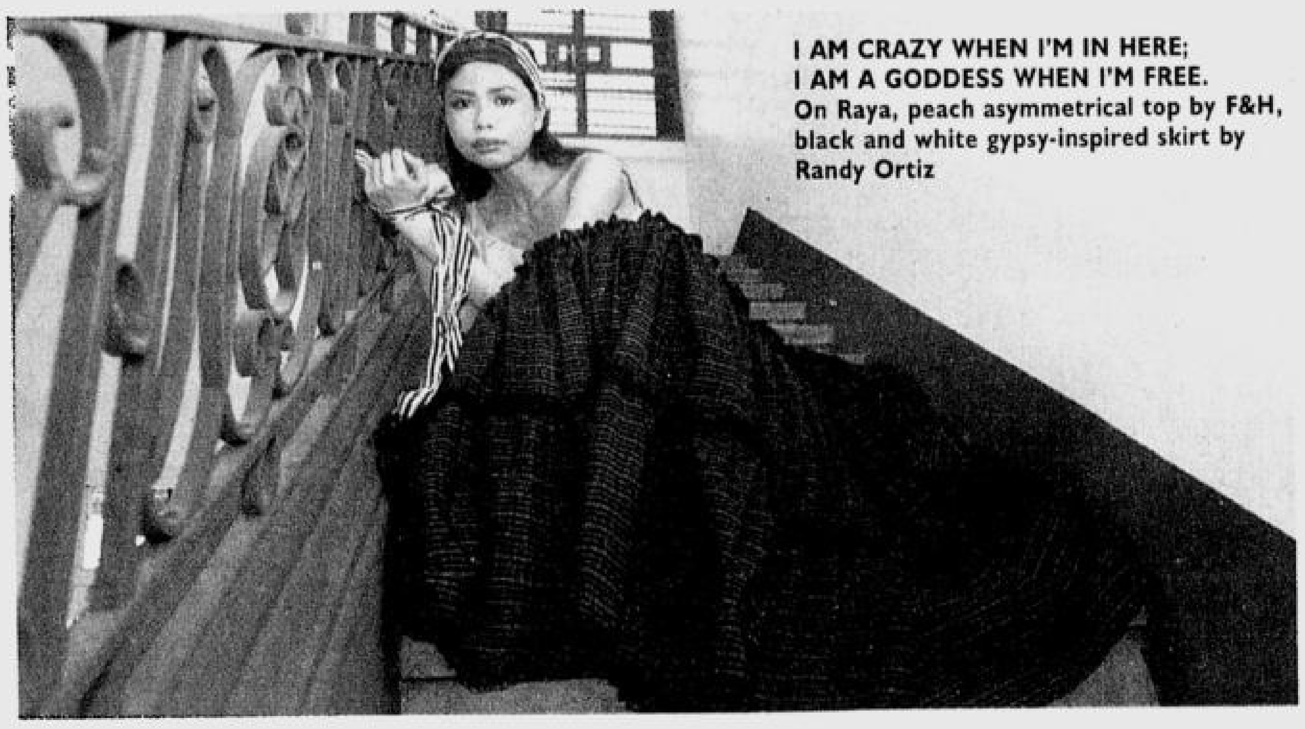
Flustered & Hooked on fashion madness

Story on page G2



"IF YOU CHAIN A DOG, IT WILL BECOME FIERCE. MORE SO A MAD MAN."
On Brian, green polo shirt by F&H, brick red studded belt with Harley Davidson-inspired buckle by F&H, brown pants with red topstitch detail on waistband by Randy Ortiz

A hip, young brand introduces some sanity amid so much style dementia



I AM CRAZY WHEN I'M IN HERE; I AM A GODDESS WHEN I'M FREE.
On Raya, peach asymmetrical top by F&H, black and white gypsy-inspired skirt by Randy Ortiz

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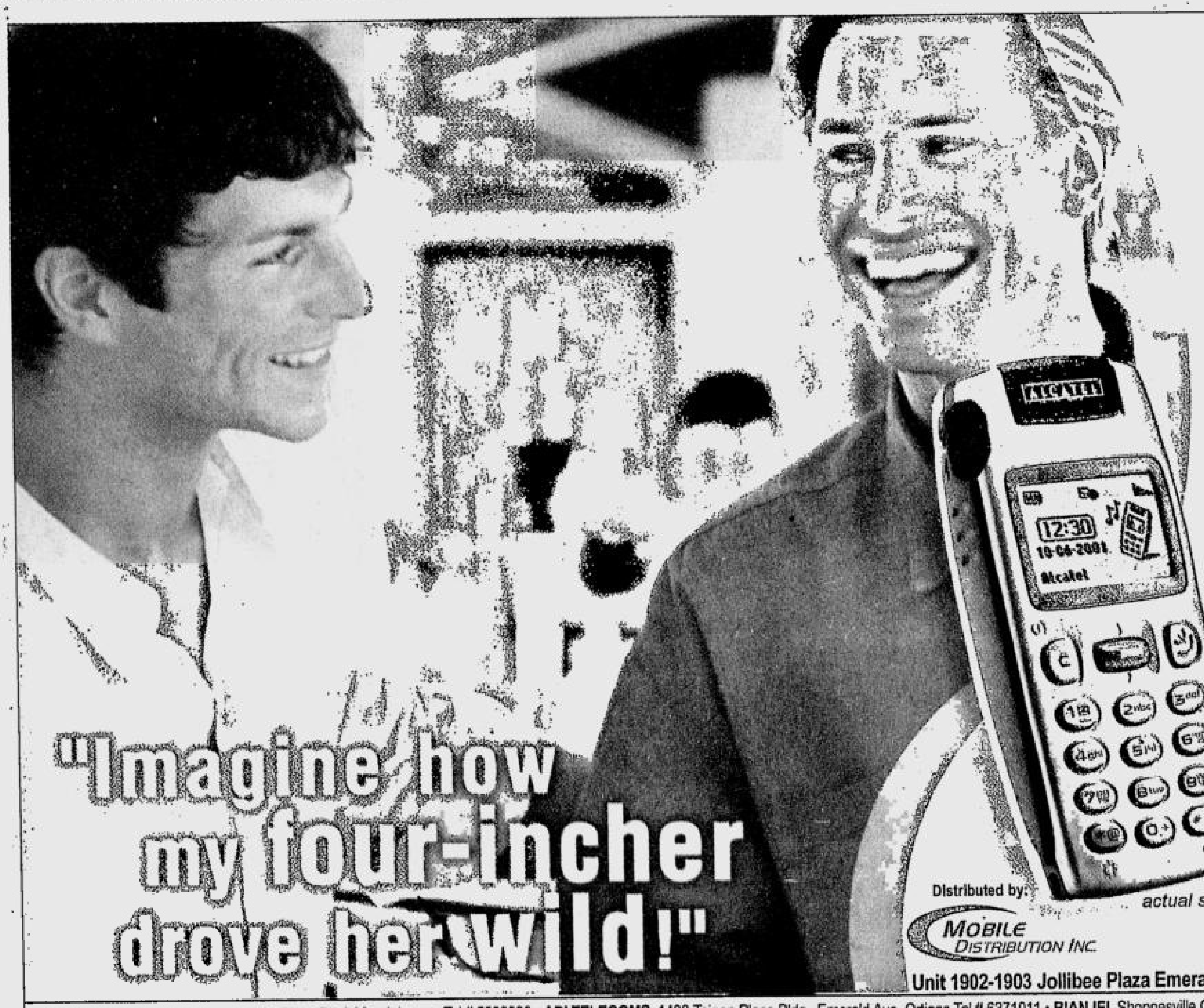

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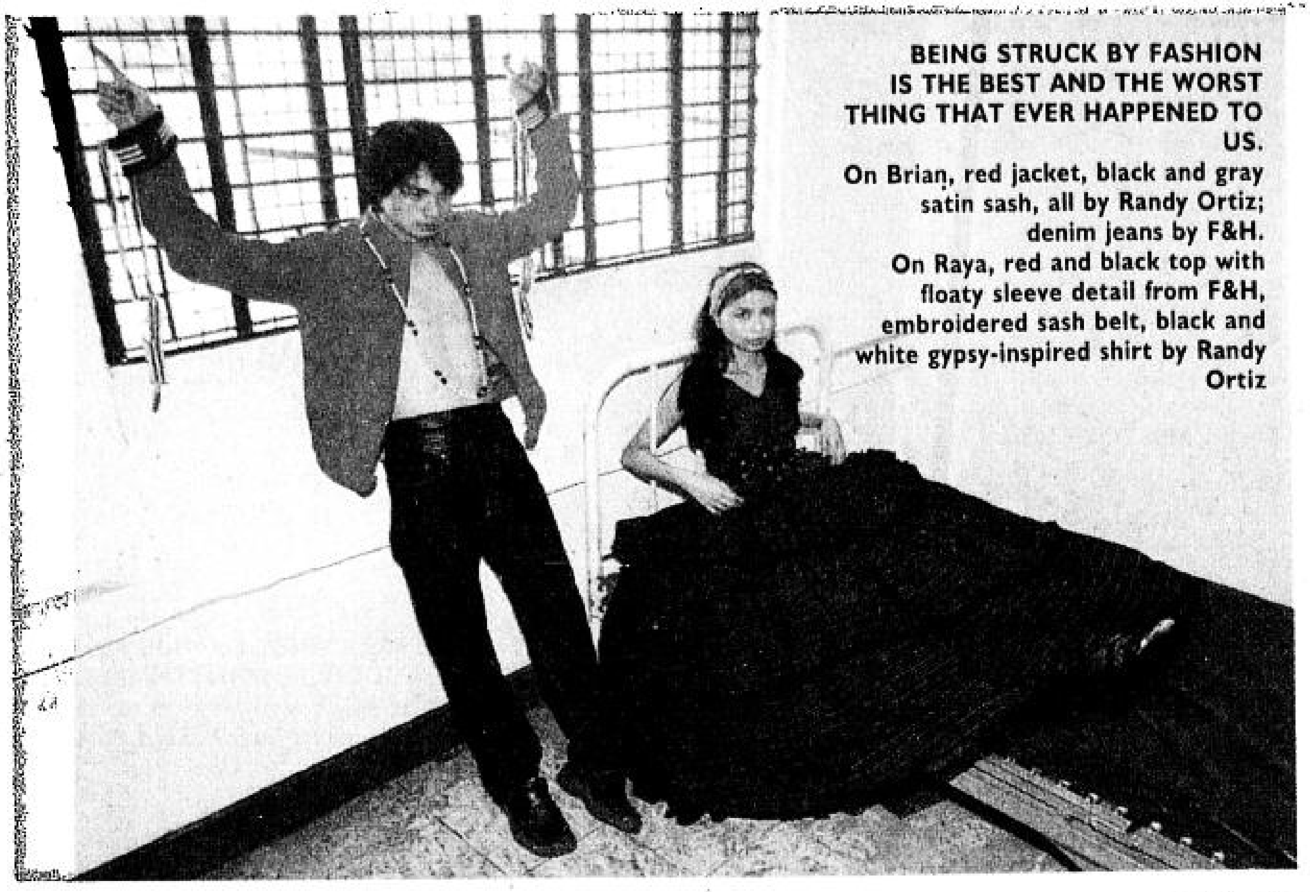


BEING STRUCK BY FASHION IS THE BEST AND THE WORST THING THAT EVER HAPPENED TO US.
On Brian, red jacket, black and gray satin sash, all by Randy Ortiz; denim jeans by F&H.
On Raya, red and black top with floaty sleeve detail from F&H, embroidered sash belt, black and white gypsy-inspired shirt by Randy Ortiz

MADNESS IS TO BE TRAPPED IN FASHION WITHOUT BEING ABLE TO ESCAPE IT.
On Brian, teal sleeveless top by F&H, denim fringe and studded belts by F&H, mint green pants by Jun-Jun Cambe

Flustered & Hooked on fashion madness

Text and styling by Dara David
Contributor
Photography by Jim Guiao Punzalan

PEOPLE not only want to look good; they want to look "ravishingly good." They make time and exert effort to groom, shop and style themselves despite their busy schedules. Gone are the days when it was enough to just jump into anything, meet up with friends, settle for what one had, attend the "party of the year," and look like everybody else.

Those were the days when we just wanted to enjoy and worry less about what we looked like. Or worse, we were just ashamed to stand out. Today, people are scraping off their "shy flakes" to let fashion become a part of their self-expression. In fact, fashion may have gotten the best and the worst—the most vain in all of us. Thus, the birth of the "fashion madness era."

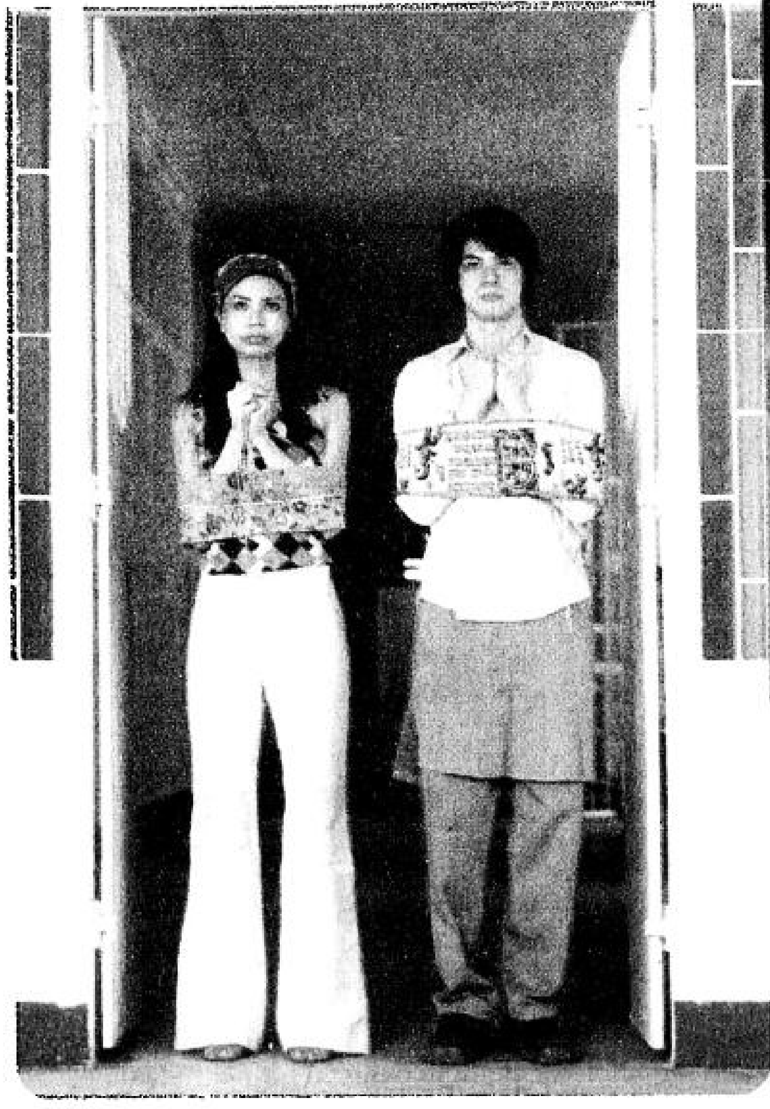
But how far do you really go for fashion's sake? How far do you let yourself join in on the madness? Do you allow yourself to wallow in its stressful pressures or do you just indulge in it for your self-satisfaction?

Let us see. You religiously watch out for "what's in" and "what's out." You update your look every two weeks, tops. You try so hard not to repeat an outfit at a social event. You manage to shop discreetly at your so-called "secret stores" and pretend to forget where you purchased your very much-envied bag-for-the-day. Yes, it gets more than crazy and mentally-draining sometimes, but that's the beauty of it.

In lieu of fashion madness, Folded & Hung (or F&H) has surfaced in the local fashion scene to cater to the very demanding needs of fashion enthusiasts. To call on the attention of all the "fashionistas" in the country and to prove F&H's strengths in fashion, image models Raya Mananquil and Brian Tan effortlessly sport the brand's clothing. The brand has simple silhouettes, trendy details, clean designs, and a very good balance of fun prints and solid colors—the pieces have a very versatile appeal to them. No matter what look, F&H serves your personal style—from a very crisp basic look to a high-fashion couture feel. Indulge.

Folded & Hung is launching its newest image models—Raya Mananquil, Brian Tan, Dean Hinkley, David Tuppen and Nadya Cross—this Friday, 9:47 p.m., at the West Drive of Glorietta 2 fronting Venezia and Buddha Bar.

IT'S WHEN PEOPLE CALL ME A FASHION VICTIM THAT I GO MAD.
On Raya, striped overlap tank by F&H, layered asymmetrical skirt by Patrice Ramos-Diaz



FASHION SOMETIMES CURES, OFTEN RELIEVES, ALWAYS COMFORTS.
On Raya, cube print top with ruffled straps by F&H, embroidered sash belt and cream pants by Randy Ortiz.
On Brian, cream long-sleeved shirt from F&H, Victorian-inspired sash by Patrice Ramos-Diaz, pants with pleated skirt detail by Jun Jun Cambe

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2BU! SURVEY

What drives you mad?

By Niño Mark M. Sablan
2bU! Correspondent

BIG cinematic occurrences such as a loved one's sudden death or a front-row seat to a murder scene usually drive people crazy. Little things though can drive us up against the wall as well. Whether it's a little annoying habit your friend does or an obsession you just can't let go, a shocking revelation you can't digest or the presence of the apple of your eyes, one thing is for sure: We've all gone mad. Here is a list of loonies plus what makes them go gaga.

The thought that Kavana allegedly saw himself in Mo Twister.—**Bunny, 22, Gapit not Paras**

Meryll Soriano's Milk Magic print ads. You've got to see my room.—**Keewich, 22, drinks milk as if she's drinking water**

Si Regine. *Nawawala ako sa huwisyo maulinigan ko lamang ang kanyang tiririt.*—**Kokak, 30, wants to join "Star for a Night" but his croaking voice proves to be a hindrance**

Every time my girlfriend gives me a foot massage. *Tumitirik ang mga mata ko sa sarap.*—**Carlo, 21, *matagal nang di tumitirik ang mga mata***

The smell of books drives me mad. Whether they smell fresh from the printing house or from the *baul*, it's a real trip for me.—**Pao, 22, early bookworm who catches the bird**

The sight of women in lingerie and fishnet stockings makes me go nuts.—**Toto, 24, recently purchased a cassette tape of Andrew E's "Porno Daw"**

Snow Crackers, the spicy one. They're simply irresistible. I consume 10 packs a week and I throw a fit whenever the supermarket runs out of stock.—**Rhea Malubay,24, recently got married to a foreigner**

Every day is a living hell without my "froggy" here by my side. Our long distance love affair has been driving me nuts for months now. I don't think I can last one more day without him.—**Katkat, 20, still lasting**

When my husband squeezes the toothpaste in the middle, that drives me nuts.—**Letty, 25, Close-Up fan**

Paper. I'm a paper freak. I stock up on a lot since I love writing and doodling. I even keep photocopies so I can recycle them.—**Oliver D., 23, Paper magazine fan**

I go crazy every time I see that Jackie Lou commercial for 555 Carne Norte. I'm not really a fan, it's just so hilarious I never fail to burst into laughter each time it's on TV.—**Joey Siaoloon, 22, hasn't tried 555 Carne Norte**

Everything about Master Showman makes me go insane. Kuya Germs' colorful outfits, the varied guests and the wannabe VJs. They're so bad they're good.—**Rodora, 24, member of the club known as Walang Tulugan!**

Angelika's RDL commercial is crazy.—**Benjie, 16, doesn't use RDL skin care products**

My roomie's cat poops everywhere and that just drives me up the wall.—**Emy, 25, loves *siopao***

Mystica's revelation on "Points of View" that she is now a *lola*. What a *lola*!—**Helen Traquena, 18, not a Mystica fan**

Betty La Fea's voice and everybody impersonating her. Crazy.—**Mar, 15, prefers Alicia**

Kim de los Santos.—**Matsaomi, 13, claims he looks like Dino Guevarra**

The fact that Ara Mina looks like Michelle Branch.—**Mike, 19, appreciates Branch's music**

That stupid Salbakuta song. Everybody's like "stupid"!—**Katreena, 18, not a Salbakuta fan, definitely**

Pink posing like Mena Suvari on "American Beauty" on the "You Make Me Sick" music video.—**Donald P., 22, doesn't like the color pink**

Darren Hayes' new hairdo.—**Dennis D., 23, misses Savage Garden**

"Pop My Myx's" segment called "Hiplist." Replays *palagi* especially *yung taga*-1:15. *Kaloka yun.*—**Jordan Nada, 21, likes VJ Nate**

Aiza Seguerra entertaining the thought of giving her mom a grandchild.—**Keith, 22, can't do the same**

Lance of N'Sync and his androgynous looks.—**Christianne, 19, rumor has it he looks like Lance**

Judy Ann Santos singing and dancing Kylie Minogue's "Can't Take You Out of My Head" on "SOP."—**Kyle, 17, not a Juday fan but wants to watch the new Juday movie**

Sex Bomb Dancers singing "Laban O Bawi" to the tune of a Kylie Minogue song.—**Reden, 13, just got circumcised**

That guy in the Likas Papaya soap ad.—**JJ Sanchez, 14, doesn't use Likas Papaya**

Vandalism in bases or toilets especially names with a lot of h's.—**Jhun, 23, real name Jun**

Songs that have "baby girl" in them.—**Baby, 18, hates her parents for giving her that name**

E-mail the author at katotino@yahoo.com

He wants to break up with his girlfriend but doesn't want to spoil her birthday

Carlos Garchitorena & September Mahino

DEAR Sep and Caloy,

I want to break up with my girlfriend but her birthday is coming up soon and I don't want her to be miserable on that day. Do you think it will be better if I break up with her after her birthday?

NOEL

Oh, please. Spare your girlfriend from the insult of your pity and break up with her as soon as possible. Giving her a few extra days of illusion will not make the breakup any easier and it certainly will not make you, the "dumper," look more like the nice guy. In fact, I'm sure that if she finds out about this intention of yours, sending you a thank-you card will be the last thing on her mind.

Give your girlfriend the respect she's due and expect her to receive the bad news maturely.

However, if the reason you are thinking of postponing the breakup is bad experience of the same nature that you've had with her before, I'd still advise the same thing. You keep delaying the breakup for one reason or another and before you know it, her birthday is coming up again and you have been miserable all the time because you can't summon up enough courage to be honest.

This is an exaggerated scenario, I know, but it's not impossible. So be a man. Do what you have to do and break up with your girlfriend before she turns another year older, both for your and her sake.

SEP

ILLUSTRATION: ALBERT RODRIGUEZ

I'm so deeply touched by your letter, but not because it is heartfelt and full of sweet intentions, which it is not, but because it has opened doors in my mind. Is breaking up just an idea you wake up to one morning, as if one day deciding your toothbrush has taken enough torture and it's time for a new one? Not to say that every breakup leads to a prophylaxis and a spanking new rubber-grip toothbrush.

How long is the waiting period before breaking the bad news? Does a simple park stroll on a holiday of cheer have a realistic and viable emotional return on investment? If Sep had a chance to annex my reply, she would underscore her "courage to be honest" bit.

If I could give a line from the Book of Blarmey, it would be, "... and so he said, 'In uncertain times, the jeepney isn't only cheap, but can be the scenic route for the active imagination.'"

But back to reality. When breakup is looming in my mind, it manifests itself from within and invariably erodes interpersonal relationships. Therefore, from my experience, will you really make a good birthday companion or will you simply be a heel-dragging burden of a man saddled by his irreverent conscience?

If experience has taught me anything, it's carpe diem when it comes to relationships and love. Either you're going long to catch that ball, or not. People who hesitate lose. So, to avoid being labeled a hypocrite, I have to take my own advice, too. So here goes: "Jennifer, I'm sorry but we can't go on like this. I can't pretend to be someone I'm not. I know you cherish your privacy more than anything, so I promise to keep all the things you've said to myself. It's not you, please know, but me. And I don't think this chain can support a weakest link, let alone two. Goodbye."

CALOY

E-mail the authors at lifestyle@inquirer.com.ph

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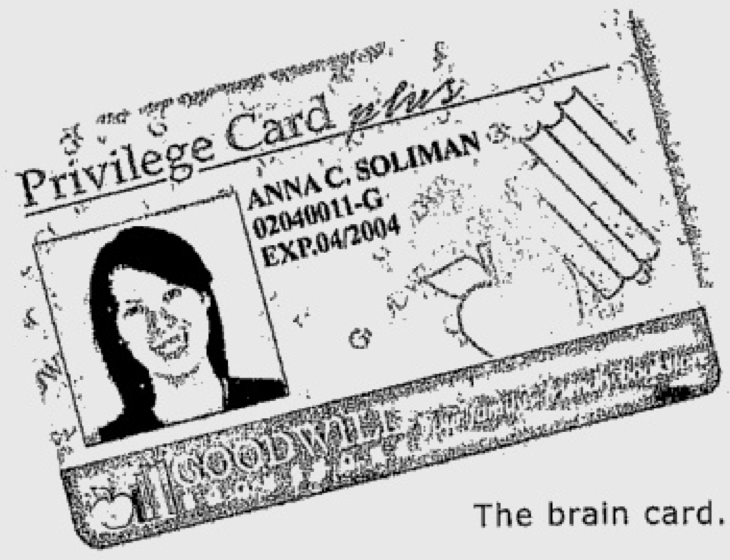

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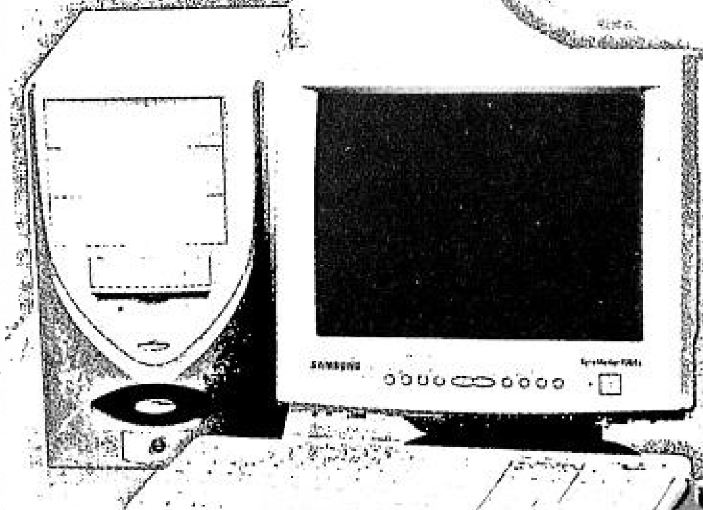

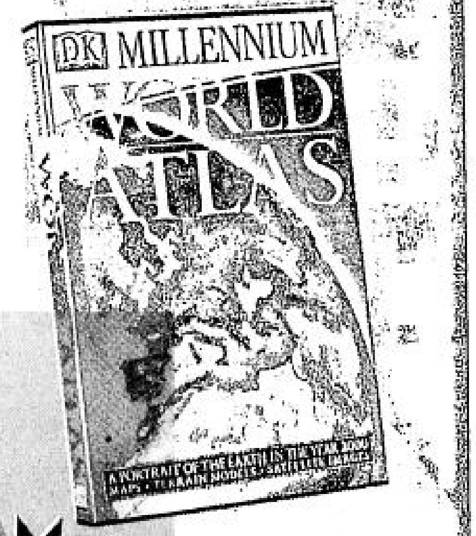

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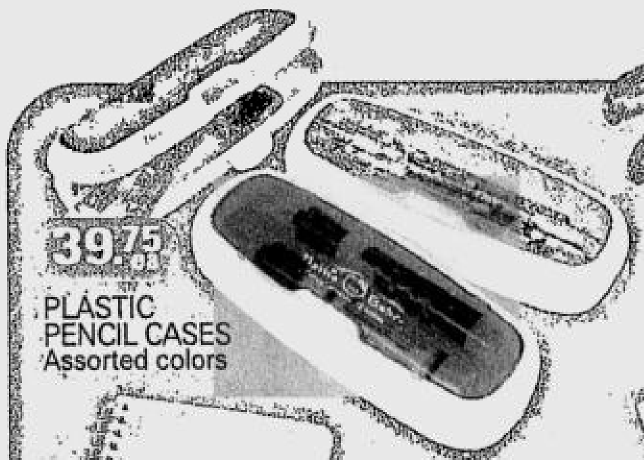
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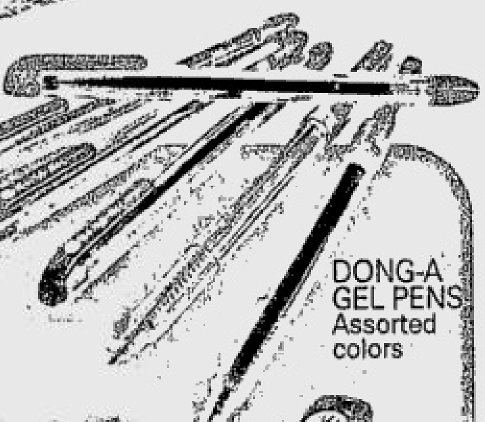
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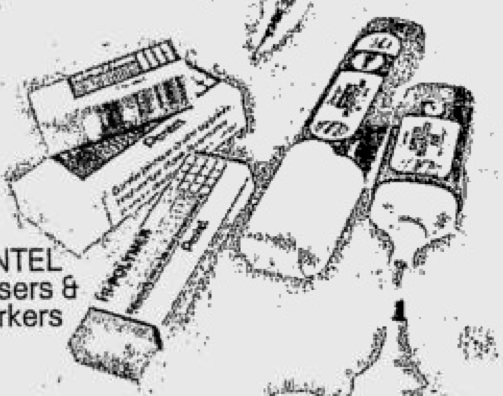
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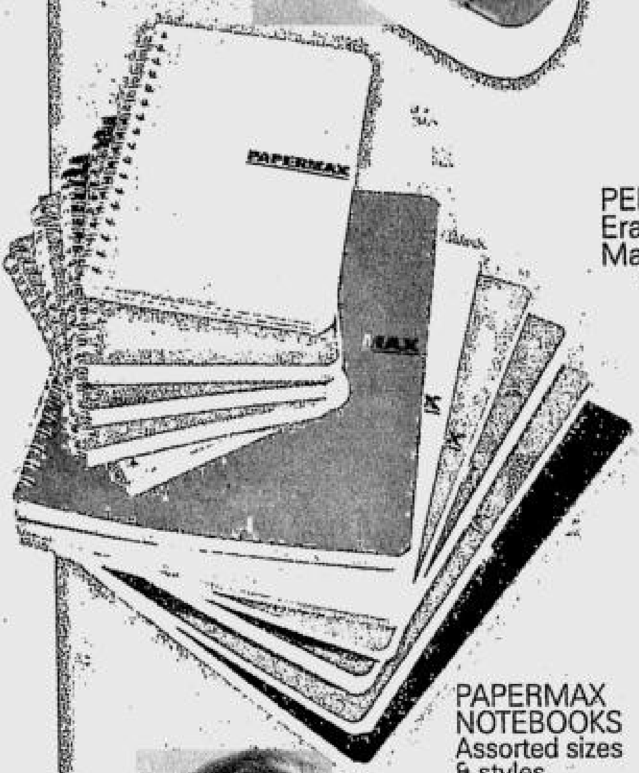
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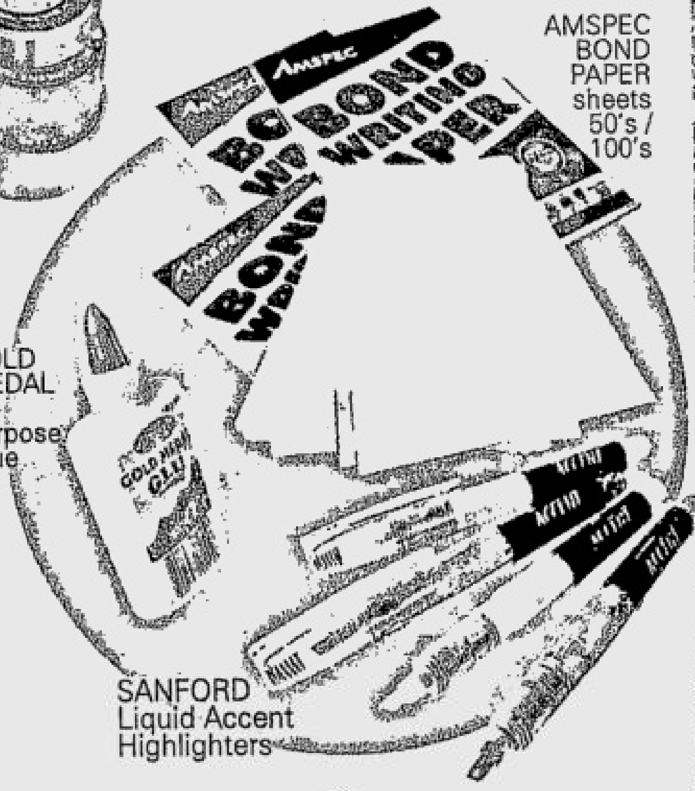
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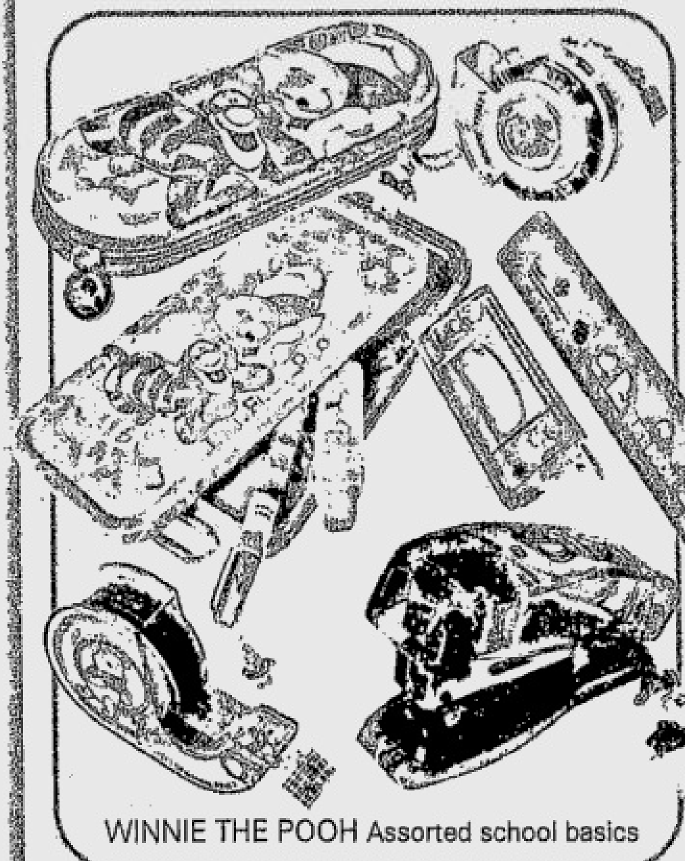
SANFORD Liquid Accent Highlighters

10.00 up
ALL-PURPOSE GLUE in singles / multi-packs


WINNIE THE POOH Assorted school basics

MERIT Notebooks

We've got it all for you!

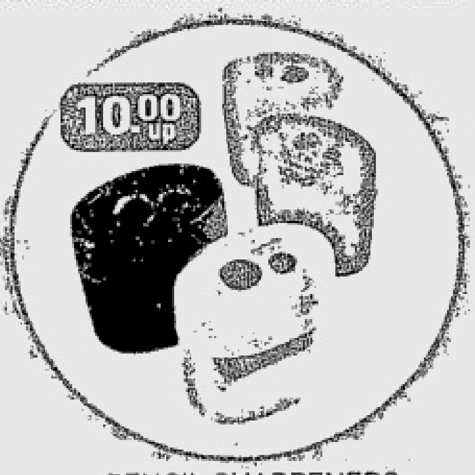
FREE
Spiral Notebook

with every P300 purchase at the Stationery Department

May 15 - June 16

Per DTI-NCR Permit No. 1810 Series of 2002

great savings great selections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PENCIL SHARPENERS
Neon / Bright Colors

small 19.75 ea
big 24.75
ACTIVITY SCISSORS

14.75 up
RULED PADS
- intermediate pads
- yellow pads
- 1/4 quiz pads
- 1/2 lengthwise
- 1/2 crosswise

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DEPARTMENT STORE

QUIAPO • MAKATI • CUBAO • HARRISON • NORTH EDSA • STA. MESA • ORTIGAS • LAS PIÑAS • BACOOR • FAIRVIEW • MANILA • PAMPANGA • ILOILO • CEBU • DAVAO

B2S
BACK TO SCHOOL

Save on cool school essentials

BOYS' White Polo

BOYS TEENS' / MEN'S School Slacks Available in khaki, black and navy blue

BOYS TEENS' / MEN'S White Polo

at the Wears Department

all the best buys all the time

GIRLS' Blouse with baby collar

BOYS' School Shorts Available in khaki and navy blue

1/2 OFF

HALF PRICE on

***Children's T-shirts** reg. 35.00 Pay only 17.50 ea

****Boys Teens' T-shirts** reg. 39.75 Pay only 19.50 ea

*with every P300 purchase at the Children's Wear Department

**with every P500 purchase at the Boys Teens' Wear Department

May 15 - June 16

Per DTI-NCR Permit No. 1810 Series of 2002

Choose from a wide selection of value buys

SMART BUY Boys' T-shirts 3 for 99.75

SM BASICS Men's Briefs 3-in-1 Value Packs 79.75

BOYS TEENS' Round neck T-shirts 69.75 ea

MEN'S Sando 2 for 89.75

BOYS' BRIEFS Available in assorted colors 6-in-1 Value Packs 199.75

GIRLS' PANTIES Assorted designs 6-in-1 Value Packs 139.75

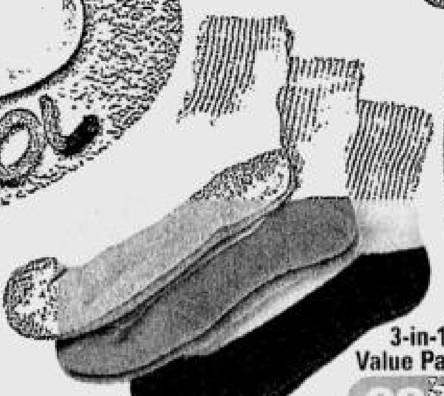
BALENO Ladies' Panties Available in packs of 3's

LADIES' Cotton Panties 3 for 59.75

BOYS' BRIEFS 3-in-1 Value Packs 99.75

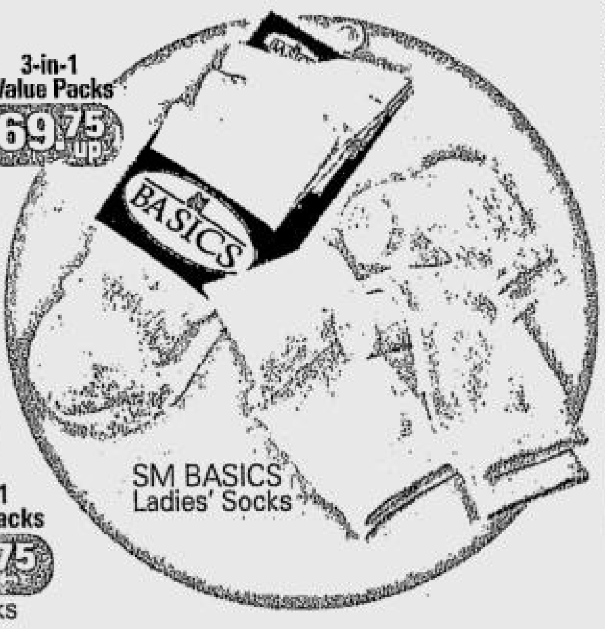
QUIAPO • MAKATI • CUBAO • HARRISON • NORTH EDSA • STA. MESA • ORTIGAS • LAS PIN

B2S
BACK TO SCHOOL



3-in-1
Value Packs
99.75

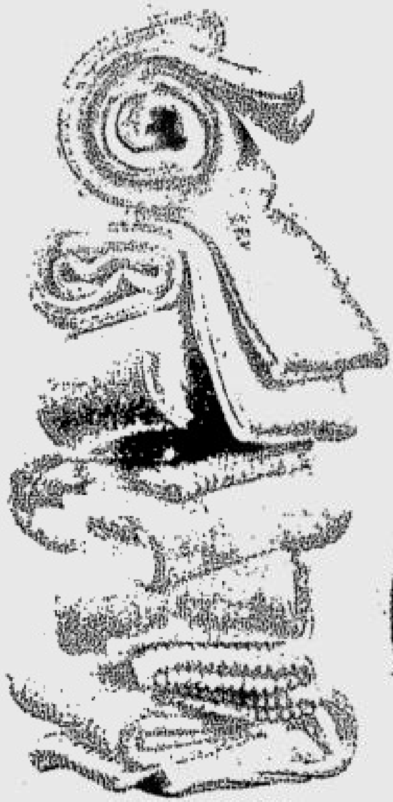
SM BASICS Men's Two-tone Socks



3-in-1
Value Packs
69.75 up

SM BASICS
Ladies' Socks

GOLD TOE
Mid-calf Sports Socks



BURLINGTON
Sports Socks

LADY PRESIDENT
Ladies' Mid-calf Socks

DUNLOP
Children's White School Socks

DUNLOP
Men's Colored Sports Socks

DARLINGTON
Children's Mid-calf Sports Socks

1/2 OFF
HALF PRICE on Children's Socks

orig. 20.00
Pay only
10.00 pair

with every P300 purchase at the Children's Shoes Department

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Per DTI-NCR Permit No. 1810 Series of 2002

at the Accessories, Shoes & Bags Departments

all the right gear
all the time

TEENS' KEDS SNEAKERS
Assorted colors

BANDOLINO
Men's Leather Slip-ons

199.75

Children's Shoes (lace-up or slip-ons)

219.75

Children's Maryjanes

449.75

399.75

Men's Rubber Shoes

FLORSHEIM
Children's Leather Shoes

SKATERS
Teens' Mid-cut Leather Shoes

299.75

PLANET School Shoes
Assorted styles

299.75

Men's Moccasins in faux leather

GIBI Ladies' Shoes with chunky heels

299.75

Ladies' Heeled Maryjanes, Slip-ons

great savings great selections

2-in-1
Value Packs
69.75

Children's Hankies

3-in-1
Value Packs
39.75

SM BASICS
Gauze Hankies

199.75

169.75

FABRIC SLING BAG & BACKPACK

We've got it all for you!

SM
DEPARTMENT STORE

AS • BACOOR • FAIRVIEW • MANILA • PAMPANGA • ILOILO • CEBU • DAVAO

B2S BACK TO SCHOOL

HAWK SCHOOL LUGGAGE COLLECTION

Trolley Bag with Lunch Case

Two-tone Backpack

Box-type Trolley with Juicer Pouch

at the Luggage & Children's Accessories Departments

all the right stuff all the time

Shoulder Bag

Trolley

BONBON KIDS COLLECTION

Shoulder Bag, Large

Backpack

ILLUSTRAZIO CANVAS BACKPACK COLLECTION

5-pc LUNCH KIT With Juicers

SCHOOL TROLLEY With Lunch Case & Juicer Pocket

CANVAS TROLLEY

HAND & SHOULDER KIDDIE BAGS

99^{00}

LUNCH KIT with Juicer and Shoulder Strap

FREE Pencil Case

with every P500 purchase of school bags at the Luggage Department

May 15 - June 16

Per DTI-NCR Permit No. 1810 Series of 2002

great savings great selections

BONBON KIDS Sling Bag & Backpack

199^{7}

BACKPACK

149^{75}

SCHOOL TROLLEY In bright colors and character prints

We've got it all for you!

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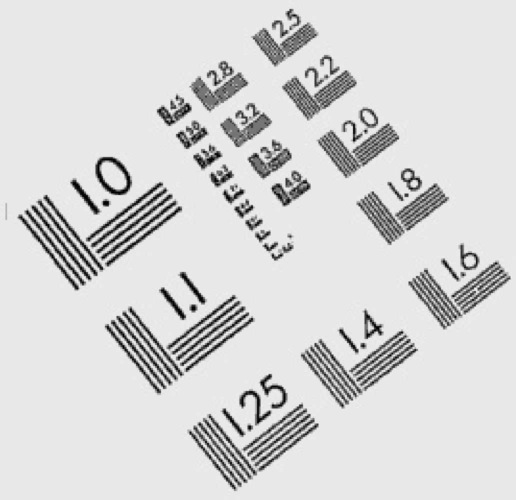
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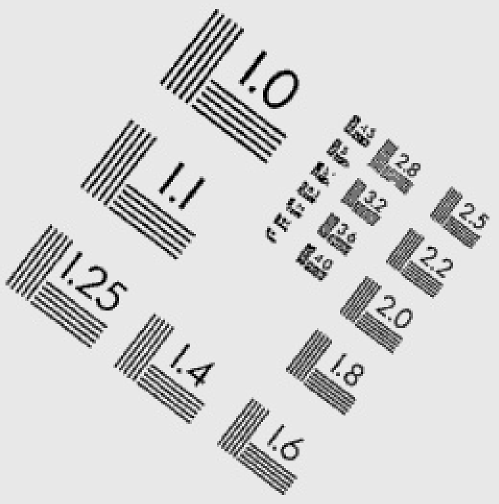
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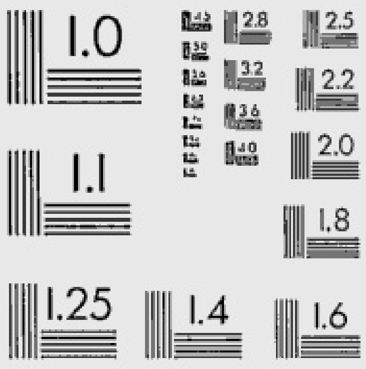
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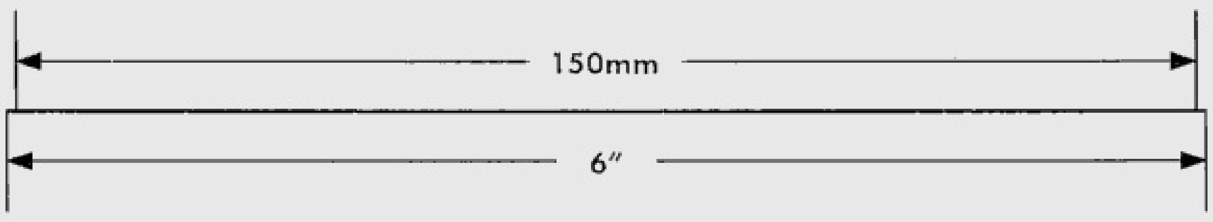

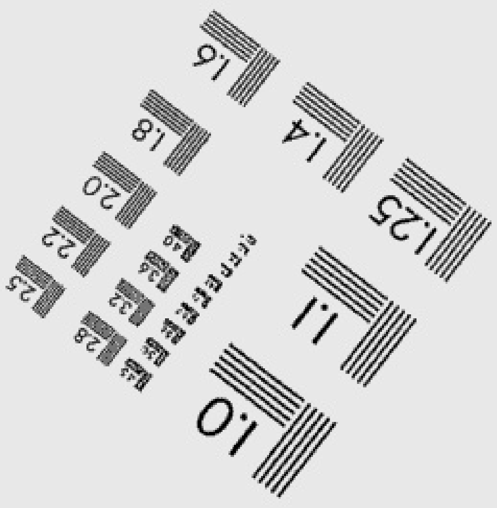
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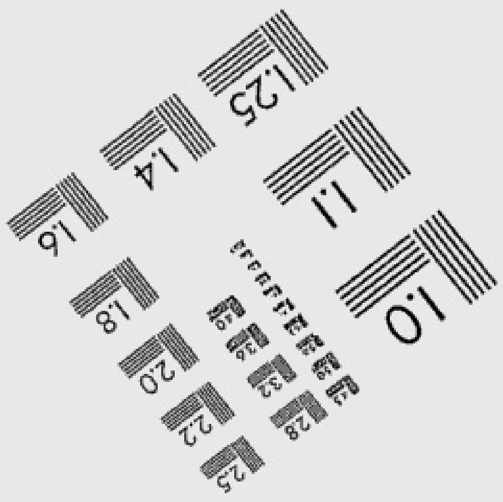
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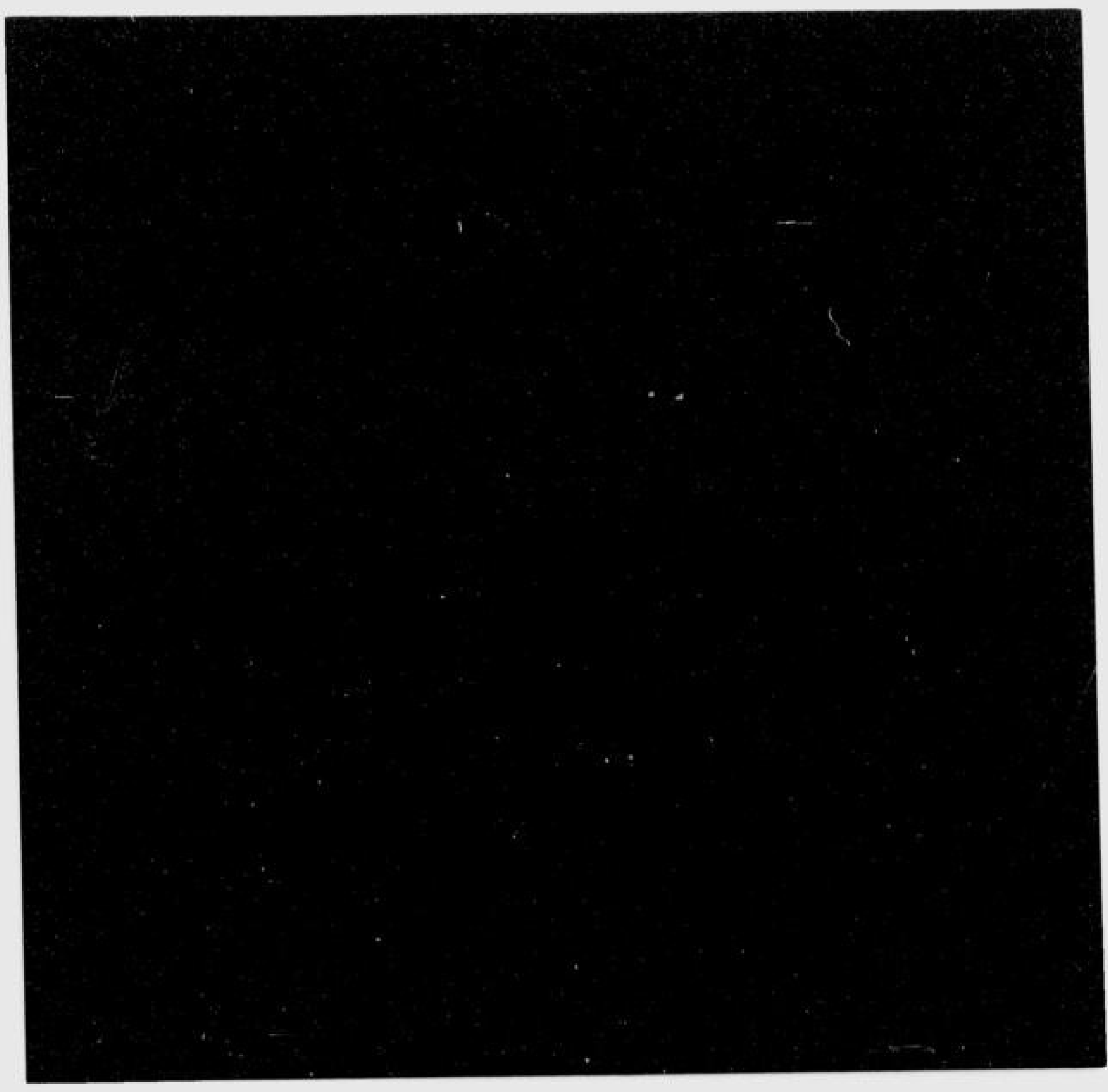

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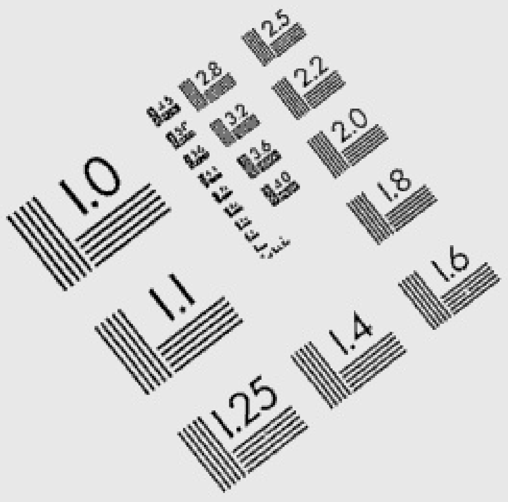
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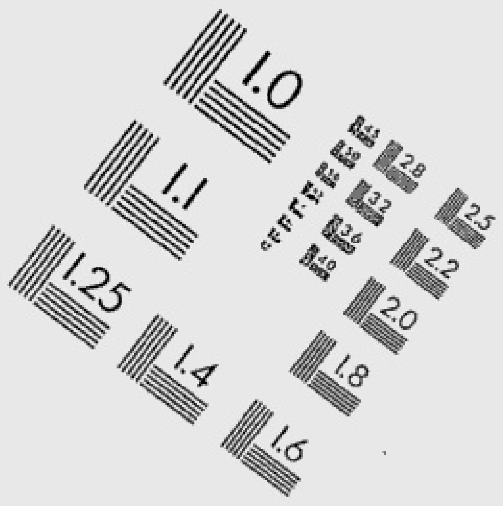
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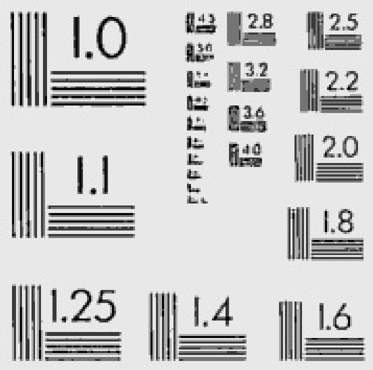
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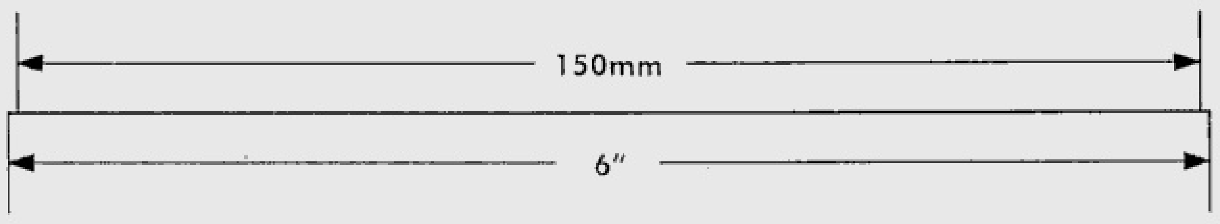

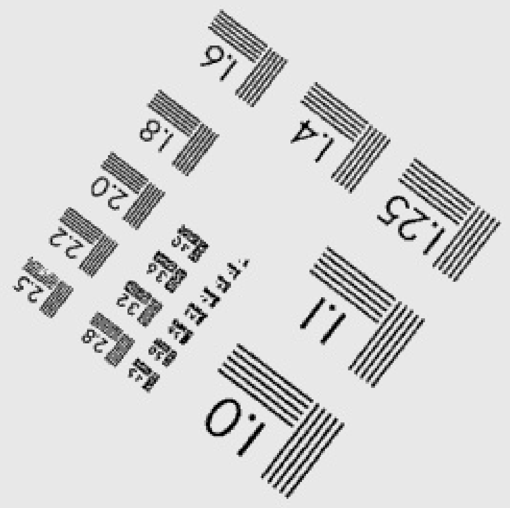
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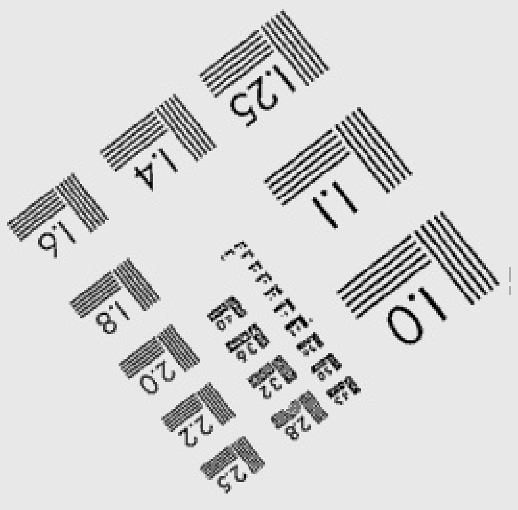
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